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THE

CASTLE of OTRANTO,

A

GOTHIC STORY.

M Patteson

THE CASTLE of OTRANTO, A GOTHIC STORY.

——Vanæ
Fingentur ſpecies, tamen ut Pes, & Caput uni
Reddantur formæ.——

HOR.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN MURRAY, Succeſſor to Mr. SANDBY, N° 32, Fleet-ſtreet.

M.DCC.LXIX.

compoſed, until the eſtabliſhment of the *Arragonian* Kings in *Naples* had made *Spaniſh* appellations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author [moderated, however by ſingular judgment] concur to make me think that the date of the compoſition was little antecedent to that of the impreſſion. Letters were then in their moſt flouriſhing ſtate in *Italy*, and contributed to diſpel the empire of ſuperſtition, at that time ſo forcibly attacked by the reformers. It is not unlikely that an artful prieſt might endeavour to turn their own arms on the innovators; and might avail himſelf of his abilities as an author to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and ſuperſtitions. If this was his view, he has certainly acted with ſignal addreſs. Such a work as the following would enſlave a hundred vulgar minds beyond half the books of controverſy that have been written from the days of *Luther* to the preſent hour.

This ſolution of the author's motives is however offered as a mere conjecture. Whatever his views were, or whatever effects the execution of them might have, his work can only be laid before the public

at

at preſent as a matter of entertainment. Even as ſuch, ſome apology for it is neceſſary. Miracles, viſions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events, are exploded now even from romances. That was not the caſe when our author wrote; much leſs when the ſtory itſelf is ſuppoſed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was ſo eſtabliſhed in thoſe dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the *manners* of the times, who ſhould omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himſelf, but he muſt repreſent his actors as believing them.

If this *air* of *the miraculous* is excuſed, the reader will find nothing elſe unworthy of his peruſal. Allow the poſſibility of the facts, and all the actors comport themſelves as perſons would do in their ſituation. There is no bombaſt, no ſimilies, flowers, digreſſions, or unneceſſary deſcriptions. Every thing tends directly to the cataſtrophe. Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almoſt obſerved throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and ſtill better maintained. Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the ſtory from ever lan-

guiſhing; and it is ſo often contraſted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a conſtant viciſſitude of intereſting paſſions.

Some perſons may perhaps think the characters of the domeſtics too little ſerious for the general caſt of the ſtory; but beſides their oppoſition to the principal perſonages, the art of the author is very obſervable in his conduct of the ſubalterns. They diſcover many paſſages eſſential to the ſtory, which could not be well brought to light but by their *naiveté* and ſimplicity: In particular, the womaniſh terror and foibles of *Bianca*, in the laſt chapter, conduce eſſentially towards advancing the cataſtrophe.

It is natural for a tranſlator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be ſo much ſtruck with the beauties of this piece as I was. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wiſh he had grounded his plan on a more uſeful moral than this; that *the ſins of fathers are viſited on their children to the third and fourth generation.* I doubt whether, in his time, any more than at preſent, ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of ſo remote a puniſhment. And yet this moral is weakened by

that

that leſs direct inſinuation, than even ſuch anathema may be diverted by devotion to St. *Nicholas*. Here the intereſt of the Monk plainly gets the better of the judgment of the Author. However, with all its faults, I have no doubt but the *Engliſh* reader will be pleaſed with a ſight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the leſſons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of the ſentiments, exempt this work from the cenſure to which romances are but too liable. Should it meet with the ſucceſs I hope for, I may be encouraged to re-print the original *Italian*, though it will tend to depreciate my own labour. Our language falls far ſhort of the charms of the *Italian*, both for variety and harmony. The latter is peculiarly excellent for ſimple narrative. It is difficult in *Engliſh to relate* without falling too low or riſing too high; a fault obviouſly occaſioned by the little care taken to ſpeak pure language in common converſation. Every *Italian* or *Frenchman* of any rank piques himſelf on ſpeaking his own tongue correctly and with choice. I cannot flatter myſelf with having done juſtice to my author in this reſpect: His ſtile is as elegant, as his conduct

duct of the paſſions is maſterly. It is pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for, the theatre.

I will detain the reader no longer, but to make one ſhort remark. Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe, that the ground-work of the ſtory is founded on truth. The ſcene is undoubtedly laid in ſome real caſtle. The author ſeems frequently, without deſign, to deſcribe particular parts. *The chamber*, ſays he, *on the right-hand*; *the door on the left-hand*; *the diſtance from the chapel to* Conrad's *apartment:* Theſe and other paſſages are ſtrong preſumptions that the author had ſome certain building in his eye. Curious perſons, who have leiſure to employ in ſuch reſearches, may poſſibly diſcover in the *Italian* writers the foundation on which our author has built. If a cataſtrophe, at all reſembling that which he deſcribes, is believed to have given riſe to this work, it will contribute to intereſt the reader, and will make the caſtle of *Otranto* a ſtill more moving ſtory.

SONNET

SONNET

To the Right Honorable

Lady MARY COKE.

THE gentle Maid, whoſe hapleſs tale
Theſe melancholy pages ſpeak;
Say, gracious Lady, ſhall ſhe fail
To draw the tear adown thy cheek?

No; never was thy pitying breaſt
Inſenſible to human woes;
Tender, tho' firm, it melts diſtreſt
For weakneſſes it never knows.

Oh! guard the marvels I relate
Of fell ambition ſcourg'd by fate,
From reaſon's peeviſh blame.

Bleſt with thy ſmile, my dauntleſs ſail
I dare expand to Fancy's gale,
For ſure thy ſmiles are Fame.

H. W.

PREFACE

To the Second Edition.

THE favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public, calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he compoſed it. But before he opens thoſe motives, it is fit that he ſhould aſk pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed perſonage of a tranſlator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were his ſole inducements to aſſume that diſguiſe, he flatters himſelf he ſhall appear excuſeable. He reſigned his performance to the impartial judgment of the public; determined to let it periſh

periſh in obſcurity, if diſapproved; nor meaning to avow ſuch a trifle, unleſs better judges ſhould pronounce that he might own it without a bluſh.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of Romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and ſometimes has been, copied with ſucceſs. Invention has not been wanting; but the great reſources of fancy have been dammed up, by a ſtrict adherence to common life. But if in the latter ſpecies Nature has cramped imagination, ſhe did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old Romances. The actions, ſentiments, converſations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it poſſible to reconcile the two kinds. Deſirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundleſs realms of invention, and thence

of creating more intereſting ſituations, he wiſhed to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in ſhort, to make them think, ſpeak and act, as it might be ſuppoſed mere men and women would do in extraordinary poſitions. He had obſerved, that in all inſpired writings, the perſonages under the diſpenſation of miracles and witneſſes to the moſt ſtupendous phenomena, never loſe ſight of their human character: whereas in the productions of romantic ſtory, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an abſurd dialogue. The actors ſeem to loſe their ſenſes, the moment the laws of Nature have loſt their tone. As the public have applauded the attempt, the author muſt not ſay he was entirely unequal to the taſk he had undertaken: yet if the new rout he has ſtruck out ſhall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he ſhall own with pleaſure and modeſty, that he was ſenſible the plan was capable of receiving greater embelliſhments than his imagination or conduct of the paſſions could beſtow on it.

With regard to the deportment of the domeſtics, on which I have touched in the former preface, I will beg leave to add a few words. The ſimplicity of their behaviour, almoſt tending to excite ſmiles, which at firſt ſeem not conſonant to the ſerious caſt of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked deſignedly in that manner. My rule was Nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the ſenſations of Princes and heroes may be, they do not ſtamp the ſame affections on their domeſtics: at leaſt the latter do not, or ſhould not be made to expreſs their paſſions in the ſame dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contraſt between the ſublime of the one and the *naiveté* of the other, ſets the pathetic of the former in a ſtronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed by the coarſe pleaſantries of vulgar actors from arriving at the knowledge of the important cataſtrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves, that he has been artfully intereſted in the depending event. But I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great maſter of nature,

Shakeſpeare,

Shakeſpeare, was the model I copied. Let me ask if his tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæſar* would not loſe a conſiderable ſhare of their ſpirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of *Polonius*, and the clumſy jeſts of the *Roman* citizens were omitted, or veſted in heroics? Is not the eloquence of *Antony*, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of *Brutus*, artificially exalted by the rude burſts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? Theſe touches remind one of the *Grecian* ſculptor, who to convey the idea of a Coloſſus within the dimenſions of a ſeal, inſerted a little boy meaſuring his thumb.

No, ſays *Voltaire* in his edition of *Corneille*, this mixture of buffoonery and ſolemnity is intolerable——*Voltaire* is a genius*—but not of *Shakeſpeare*'s magnitude. Without

* The following remark is foreign to the preſent queſtion, yet excuſable in an *Engliſhman*, who is willing to think that the ſevere criticiſms of ſo maſterly a writer as *Voltaire* on our immortal countrymen, may have been the effuſions of wit and precipitation, rather

 than

Without recurring to diſputable authority, I appeal from *Voltaire* to himſelf. I ſhall not avail myſelf of his former encomiums on our mighty poet; though the *French* critic has twice tranſlated the ſame ſpeech in *Hamlet*, ſome years ago in admiration, latterly in deriſion; and I am ſorry to find

than the reſult of judgment and attention. May not the Critic's ſkill in the force and powers of our language have been as incorrect and incompetent as his knowledge of our hiſtory? of the latter his own pen has dropped glaring evidence. In his Preface to *Thomas Corneille*'s Earl of *Eſſex*, Monſieur *de Voltaire* allows that the truth of hiſtory has been groſsly perverted in that piece. In excuſe he pleads, that when *Corneille* wrote, the *Nobleſſe* of *France* were much unread in *Engliſh* ſtory; but now, ſays the commentator, that they ſtudy it, ſuch miſrepreſentation would not be ſuffered ——yet forgetting that the period of ignorance is lapſed, and that it is not very neceſſary to inſtruct the knowing, he undertakes from the overflowing of his own reading to give the Nobility of his own country a detail of Queen *Elizabeth*'s favourites—of whom, ſays he, *Robert Dudley* was the firſt, and the Earl of *Leiceſter* the ſecond.——Could one have believed that it could be neceſſary to inform Monſieur *de Voltaire* himſelf, that *Robert Dudley* and the Earl of *Leiceſter* were the ſame perſon?

that

that his judgment grows weaker, when it ought to be farther matured. But I ſhall make uſe of his own words, delivered on the general topic of the theatre, when he was neither thinking to recommend or decry *Shakeſpeare*'s practice; conſequently at a moment when *Voltaire* was impartial. In the preface to his *Enfant Prodigue*, that exquiſite piece of which I declare my admiration, and which, ſhould I live twenty years longer, I truſt I ſhall never attempt to ridicule, he has theſe words, ſpeaking of Comedy [but equally applicable to Tragedy, if Tragedy is, as ſurely it ought to be, a picture of human life; nor can I conceive why occaſional pleaſantry ought more to be baniſhed from the tragic ſcene, than pathetic ſerioufneſs from the comic] *On y voit un melange de ſerieux et de plaiſanterie, de comique et de touchant*; ſouvent meme une ſeule avanture *produit tous ces contraſtes. Rien n'eſt ſi commun qu'une maiſon dans laquelle* un pere gronde, une fille occupée de ſa paſſion pleure; *le fils ſe moque des deux, et quelques parens prennent part differemment à la ſcene*, &c. *Nous n'inferons pas de là que toute Comedie doive avoir des ſcenes*

de bouffonerie et des ſcenes attendriſſantes: il y a beaucoup de tres bonnes pieces ou il ne regne que de la gayetè; d'autres toutes ſerieuſes; d'autres melangèes: d'autres ou l'attendriſſement va juſquez aux larmes: il ne faut donner l'excluſion à aucun genre: *et ſi l'on me demandoit, quel genre eſt le meilleur, je repondrois, celui qui eſt le mieux traitè.* Surely if a Comedy may be *toute ſerieuſe*, Tragedy may now and then, ſoberly, be indulged in a ſmile. Who ſhall preſcribe it? ſhall the critic, who in ſelf-defence declares that *no kind* ought to be excluded from Comedy, give laws to *Shakeſpeare?*

I AM aware that the preface from whence I have quoted theſe paſſages, does not ſtand in Monſieur *de Voltaire*'s name, but in that of his editor; yet who doubts that the editor and author were the ſame perſon? or where is the editor, who has ſo happily poſſeſſed himſelf of his author's ſtile and brilliant eaſe of argument? Theſe paſſages were indubitably the genuine ſentiments of that great writer. In his epiſtle to *Maffei*, prefixed to his *Merope*, he delivers almoſt the ſame opinion, though I doubt

doubt with a little irony. I will repeat his words, and then give my reaſon for quoting them. After tranſlating a paſſage in *Maffei*'s *Merope*, Monſieur *de Voltaire* adds, *Tous ces traits ſont naifs: tout y eſt convenable à ceux que vous introduiſez ſur la ſcene*, et aux mœurs que vous leur donnez. *Ces familiarités naturelles euſſent eté, à ce que je crois, bien recuès dans Athenes; mais Paris et notre parterre veulent une autre eſpece de ſimplicité.* I doubt, I ſay, whether there is not a grain of ſneer in this and other paſſages of that epiſtle; yet the force of truth is not damaged by being tinged with ridicule. *Maffei* was to repreſent a *Grecian* ſtory: Surely the *Athenians* were as competent judges of *Grecian* manners and of the propriety of introducing them, as the *Parterre* of *Paris*. On the contrary, ſays *Voltaire* [and I cannot but admire his reaſoning] there were but ten thouſand citizens at *Athens*, and *Paris* has near eight hundred thouſand inhabitants, among whom one may reckon thirty thouſand judges of dramatic works. ——Indeed!——but allowing ſo numerous a tribunal, I believe this is the only inſtance in which it was ever pretended that thirty thou-

thouſand perſons, living near two thouſand years after the æra in queſtion, were, upon the mere face of the poll, declared better judges than the *Grecians* themſelves of what ought to be the manners of a Tragedy written on a *Grecian* ſtory.

I WILL not enter into a diſcuſſion of the *eſpece de ſimplicitè*, which the *Parterre* of *Paris* demands, nor of the ſhackles with which *the thirty thouſand judges* have cramped their poetry, the chief merit of which, as I gather from repeated paſſages in *The New Commentary on* Corneille, conſiſts in vaulting in ſpite of thoſe fetters; a merit which, if true, would reduce poetry from the lofty effort of imagination, to a puerile and moſt contemptible labour——*difficiles nugæ* with a witneſs! I cannot however help mentioning a couplet, which, to my *Engliſh* ears, always ſounded as the flatteſt and moſt trifling inſtance of circumſtantial propriety; but which *Voltaire*, who has dealt ſo ſeverely with nine parts in ten of *Corneille*'s works, has ſingled out to defend in *Racine*;

De

De ſon appartement cette porte eſt prochaine,
Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.

In *Engliſh*,

To Cæſar's *cloſet through this door you come,*
And t'other leads to the Queen's drawing-room.

Unhappy *Shakeſpeare!* hadſt thou made *Roſencraus* inform his compeer, *Guildenſtern*, of the ichnography of the palace of *Copenhagen*, inſtead of preſenting us with a moral dialogue between the Prince of *Denmark* and the grave-digger, the illuminated pit of *Paris* would have been inſtructed *a ſecond time* to adore thy talents.

THE reſult of all I have ſaid, is, to ſhelter my own daring under the canon of the brighteſt genius this country, at leaſt, has produced. I might have pleaded, that having created a new ſpecies of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: But I ſhould be more proud of having imitated,

imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a diſtance, ſo maſterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unleſs I could have marked my work with genius as well as with originality. Such as it is, the Public have honoured it ſufficiently, whatever rank their ſuffrages allot to it.

THE

THE

CASTLE of OTRANTO,

A

Gothic STORY, &c.

CHAPTER I.

MANFRED, Prince of *Otranto*, had one ſon and one daughter: The latter a moſt beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called *Matilda*. *Conrad*, the ſon, was three years younger, a homely youth, ſickly, and of no promiſing diſpoſition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never ſhowed any

ſymptoms of affection to *Matilda*. *Manfred* had contracted a marriage for his ſon with the Marquis of *Vicenza*'s daughter, *Iſabella*; and ſhe had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of *Manfred*, that he might celebrate the wedding as ſoon as *Conrad*'s infirm ſtate of health would permit. *Manfred*'s impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former indeed, apprehending the ſeverity of their Prince's diſpoſition, did not dare to utter their ſurmiſes on this precipitation. *Hippolita*, his wife, an amiable lady, did ſometimes venture to repreſent the danger of marrying their only ſon ſo early, conſidering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but ſhe never received any other anſwer than reflexions on her own ſterility, who had given him but one heir. His tenants and ſubjects were leſs cautious in their diſcourſes: They attributed this haſty wedding to the Prince's dread of ſeeing accompliſhed an ancient prophecy, which was ſaid to have pronounced, that *the Caſtle and Lordſhip of* Otranto

Otranto *ſhould paſs from the preſent family, whenever the real owner ſhould be grown too large to inhabit it.* It was difficult to make any ſenſe of this prophecy; and ſtill leſs eaſy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in queſtion. Yet theſe myſteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the leſs to their opinion.

Young *Conrad*'s birth-day was fixed for his eſpouſals. The company was aſſembled in the chapel of the Caſtle, and every thing ready for beginning the divine office, when *Conrad* himſelf was miſſing. *Manfred* impatient of the leaſt delay, and who had not obſerved his ſon retire, diſpatched one of his attendants to ſummon the young Prince. The ſervant, who had not ſtaid long enough to have croſſed the court to *Conrad*'s apartment, came running back breathleſs, in a frantick manner, his eyes ſtaring, and foaming at the mouth. He ſaid nothing, but pointed to the court. The company were ſtruck with terror and amazement. The Princeſs *Hippolita*.

without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her ſon, ſwooned away. *Manfred*, leſs apprehenſive than enraged at the procraſtination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domeſtic, aſked imperiouſly, what was the matter? The fellow made no anſwer, but continued pointing towards the court-yard; and at laſt, after repeated queſtions put to him, cried out, oh! The helmet! the helmet! In the mean time, ſome of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confuſed noiſe of ſhrieks, horror, and ſurpriſe. *Manfred*, who began to be alarmed at not ſeeing his ſon, went himſelf to get information of what occaſioned this ſtrange confuſion. *Matilda* remained endeavouring to aſſiſt her mother, and *Iſabella* ſtaid for the ſame purpoſe, and to avoid ſhowing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, ſhe had conceived little affection.

The firſt thing that ſtruck *Manfred*'s eyes was a group of his ſervants endeavouring to raiſe ſomething that appeared to him a mountain

of

of ſable plumes. He gazed without believing his ſight. What are ye doing? cried *Manfred* wrathfully; where is my ſon? A volley of voices replied, Oh! My Lord! the Prince! the Prince, the helmet! the helmet! ſhocked with theſe lamentable ſounds, and dreading he knew not what; he advanced haſtily,—but what a ſight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child daſhed to pieces, and almoſt buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any caſque ever made for human being, and ſhaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the ſpectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and above all, the tremendous phænomenon before him, took away the Prince's ſpeech. Yet his ſilence laſted longer than even grief could occaſion. He fixed his eyes on what he wiſhed in vain to believe a viſion; and ſeemed leſs attentive to his loſs, than buried in meditation on the ſtupendous object that had occa-

ſioned it. He touched, he examined the fatal caſque; nor could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young Prince, divert the eyes of *Manfred* from the portent before him. All who had known his partial fondneſs for young *Conrad*, were as much ſurprized at their Prince's inſenſibility, as thunder-ſtruck themſelves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpſe into the hall, without receiving the leaſt direction from *Manfred*. As little was he attentive to the Ladies who remained in the chapel: On the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy Princeſſes, his wife and daughter, the firſt ſounds that dropped from *Manfred*'s lips were, take care of the lady *Iſabella*.

The domeſtics, without obſerving the ſingularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their miſtreſs, to conſider it as peculiarly addreſſed to her ſituation, and flew to her aſſiſtance. They conveyed her to her chamber more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the ſtrange circumſtances ſhe heard, except the death

death of her ſon. *Matilda*, who doated on her mother, ſmothered her own grief and amazement, and thought of nothing but aſſiſting and comforting her afflicted parent. *Iſabella*, who had been treated by *Hippolita* like a daughter, and who returned that tenderneſs with equal duty and affection, was ſcarce leſs aſſiduous about the Princeſs; at the ſame time endeavouring to partake and leſſen the weight of ſorrow which ſhe ſaw *Matilda* ſtrove to ſuppreſs, for whom ſhe had conceived the warmeſt ſympathy of friendſhip. Yet her own ſituation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young *Conrad*, except commiſeration; and ſhe was not ſorry to be delivered from a marriage which had promiſed her little felicity, either from her deſtined bridegroom, or from the ſevere temper of *Manfred*, who, though he had diſtinguiſhed her by great indulgence, had imprinted her mind with terror, from his cauſeleſs rigour to ſuch amiable Princeſſes as *Hippolita* and *Matilda*.

[illegible] conveying the wretched [illegible] *Manfred* remained in the [illegible] caique, and re- [illegible] which the ſtrangeneſs of [illegible] aſſembled around him. The [illegible] terminated, tended ſolely to in- [illegible] neither any man knew from whence [illegible] came! Nobody could give him [illegible] information. However, as it ſeemed [illegible] the object of his curioſity, it ſoon [illegible] of the reſt of the ſpectators, whoſe [illegible] were as untrue and improbable, as [illegible] was unprecedented. In [illegible], a young pea- [illegible] drawn thither from a [illegible] obſerved that the mira- [illegible] like that on the figure [illegible] in the church of St. *Ni-* [illegible] What ſpell have! cried *Man-* [illegible] in a tempeſt of [illegible] by the collar;

how

how dareſt thou utter ſuch treaſon? thy life ſhall pay for it. The ſpectators, who as little comprehended the cauſe of the Prince's fury as all the reſt they had ſeen, were at a loſs to unravel this new circumſtance. The young peaſant himſelf was ſtill more aſtoniſhed, not conceiving how he had offended the Prince: Yet recollecting himſelf, with a mixture of grace and humility, he diſengaged himſelf from *Manfred*'s gripe, and then with an obeiſance, which diſcovered more jealouſy of innocence, than diſmay; he aſked, with reſpect, of what he was guilty! *Manfred*, more inraged at the vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had ſhaken off his hold, than appeaſed by his ſubmiſſion, ordered his attendants to ſeize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends, whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peaſant in their arms.

During this altercation, ſome of the vulgar ſpectators had run to the great church, which ſtood near the caſtle, and came back

open-

open-mouthed, declaring, that the helmet was miſſing from *Alfonſo*'s ſtatue. *Manfred*, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he ſought a ſubject on which to vent the tempeſt within him, he ruſhed again on the young peaſant, crying, Villain! Monſter! Sorcerer! 'tis thou haſt done this! 'tis thou haſt ſlain my ſon! The mob, who wanted ſome object within the ſcope of their capacities, on whom they might diſcharge their bewildered reaſonings, caught the words from the mouth of their Lord, and re-ecchoed, ay, ay; 'tis he, 'tis he: He has ſtolen the helmet from good *Alfonſo*'s tomb, and daſhed out the brains of our young Prince with it,—never reflecting how enormous the diſproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of ſteel before their eyes; nor how impoſſible it was for a youth ſeemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of ſo prodigious a weight.

The folly of theſe ejaculations brought *Manfred* to himſelf: Yet whether provoked at the peaſant

peaſant having obſerved the reſemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther diſcovery of the abſence of that in the church; or wiſhing to bury any freſh rumour under ſo impertinent a ſuppoſition; he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necromancer, and that till the church could take cognizance of the affair, he would have the Magician, whom they had thus detected, kept priſoner under the helmet itſelf, which he ordered his attendants to raiſe, and place the young man under it; declaring he ſhould be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furniſh him.

It was in vain for the youth to repreſent againſt this prepoſterous ſentence: In vain did *Manfred*'s friends endeavour to divert him from this ſavage and ill-grounded reſolution. The generality were charmed with their Lord's deciſion, which, to their apprehenſions, carried great appearance of juſtice, as the Magician was to be puniſhed by the very inſtrument with which

he

he had offended: Nor were they ſtruck with the leaſt compunction at the probability of the youth being ſtarved, for they firmly believed, that, by his diabolic ſkill, he could eaſily ſupply himſelf with nutriment.

Manfred thus ſaw his commands even chearfully obeyed, and appointing a guard with ſtrict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the priſoner; he diſmiſſed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the caſtle, in which he ſuffered none but his domeſtics to remain.

In the mean time, the care and zeal of the young Ladies had brought the Princeſs *Hippolita* to herſelf, who amidſt the tranſports of her own ſorrow, frequently demanded news of her Lord, would have diſmiſſed her attendants to watch over him, and at laſt enjoined *Matilda* to leave her, and viſit and comfort her father. *Matilda*, who wanted no affectionate duty to *Manfred*, though ſhe trembled at his auſterity, obeyed the orders of *Hippolita*, whom ſhe tenderly recommended

mended to *Iſabella*; and enquiring of the domeſtics for her father, was informed that he was retired to his chamber, and had commanded that nobody ſhould have admittance to him. Concluding that he was immerſed in ſorrow for the death of her brother, and fearing to renew his tears by the ſight of his ſole remaining child, ſhe heſitated whether ſhe ſhould break in upon his affliction; yet ſolicitude for him, backed by the commands of her mother, encouraged her to venture diſobeying the orders he had given, a fault ſhe had never been guilty of before. The gentle timidity of her nature made her pauſe for ſome minutes at his door. She heard him traverſe his chamber backwards and forwards with diſordered ſteps; a mood which increaſed her apprehenſions. She was however juſt going to beg admittance, when *Manfred* ſuddenly opened the door; and as it was now twilight, concurring with the diſorder of his mind, he did not diſtinguiſh the perſon, but aſked angrily, who it was? *Matilda* replied trembling,

trembling, my deareſt father, it is I, your daughter. *Manfred* ſtepping back haſtily, cried, Begone, I do not want a daughter; and flinging back abruptly, clapped the door againſt the terrified *Matilda*.

She was too well acquainted with her father's impetuoſity to venture a ſecond intruſion. When ſhe had a little recovered the ſhock of ſo bitter a reception, ſhe wiped away her tears to prevent the additional ſtab that the knowledge of it would give to *Hippolita*, who queſtioned her in the moſt anxious terms on the health of *Manfred*, and how he bore his loſs. *Matilda* aſſured her he was well, and ſupported his misfortune with manly fortitude. But will he not let me ſee him? ſaid *Hippolita* mournfully; will he not permit me to blend my tears with his, and ſhed a mother's ſorrows in the boſom of her Lord? Or do you deceive me, *Matilda?* I know how *Manfred* doated on his ſon: Is not the ſtroke too heavy for him? has he not ſunk under it? —You do not anſwer me—alas! I dread the worſt!

worſt! — raiſe me, my maidens; I will, I will ſee my Lord. Bear me to him inſtantly: He is dearer to me even than my children. *Matilda* made ſigns to *Iſabella* to prevent *Hippolita*'s riſing; and both thoſe lovely young women were uſing their gentle violence to ſtop and calm the Princeſs, when a ſervant, on the part of *Manfred*, arrived and told *Iſabella* that his Lord demanded to ſpeak with her.

With me! cried *Iſabella*. Go, ſaid *Hippolita*, relieved by a meſſage from her Lord: *Manfred* cannot ſupport the ſight of his own family. He thinks you leſs diſordered than we are, and dreads the ſhock of my grief. Conſole him, dear *Iſabella*, and tell him I will ſmother my own anguiſh rather than add to his.

As it was now evening, the ſervant, who conducted *Iſabella*, bore a torch before her. When they came to *Manfred*, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he ſtarted and ſaid haſtily, take away that light, and begone. Then ſhutting the door impetuouſly, he flung

himſelf upon a bench againſt the wall, and bad *Iſabella* ſit by him. She obeyed trembling. I ſent for you, Lady, ſaid he,—and then ſtopped under great appearance of confuſion. My Lord! —Yes, I ſent for you on a matter of great moment, reſumed he,—— dry your tears, young Lady—you have loſt your bridegroom.—Yes, cruel fate! and I have loſt the hopes of my race! — but *Conrad* was not worthy of your beauty—how! my Lord, ſaid *Iſabella*; ſure you do not ſuſpect me of not feeling the concern I ought: My duty and affection would have always — think no more of him, interrupted *Manfred*; he was a ſickly puny child, and heaven has perhaps taken him away, that I might not truſt the honours of my houſe on ſo frail a foundation. The line of *Manfred* calls for numerous ſupports. My fooliſh fondneſs for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence—but it is better as it is. I hope, in a few years, to have reaſon to rejoice at the death of *Conrad*.

Words cannot paint the aſtoniſhment of *Iſabella*. At firſt ſhe apprehended that grief had diſordered *Manfred*'s underſtanding. Her next thought ſuggeſted that this ſtrange diſcourſe was deſigned to enſnare her: She feared that *Manfred* had perceived her indifference for his ſon: And in conſequence of that idea ſhe replied, Good my Lord, do not doubt my tenderneſs: My heart would have accompanied my hand. *Conrad* would have engroſſed all my care; and wherever fate ſhall diſpoſe of me, I ſhall always cheriſh his memory, and regard your Highneſs and the virtuous *Hippolita* as my parents. Curſe on *Hippolita!* cried *Manfred:* Forget her from this moment as I do. In ſhort, Lady, you have miſſed a huſband undeſerving of your charms: They ſhall now be better diſpoſed of. Inſtead of a ſickly boy, you ſhall have a huſband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring. Alas! My Lord, ſaid *Iſabella*, my mind is too ſadly engroſſed by the recent cata-

ſtrophe in your family to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it ſhall be his pleaſure, I ſhall obey, as I did when I conſented to give my hand to your ſon: But until his return, permit me to remain under your hoſpitable roof, and employ the melancholy hours in aſſwaging yours, *Hippolita*'s, and the fair *Matilda*'s affliction.

I deſired you once before, ſaid *Manfred* angrily, not to name that woman: From this hour ſhe muſt be a ſtranger to you, as ſhe muſt be to me; — in ſhort, *Iſabella*, ſince I cannot give you my ſon, I offer you myſelf.—Heavens! cried *Iſabella*, waking from her deluſion, what do I hear! You! My Lord! You! My father-in-law! the father of *Conrad!* the huſband of the virtuous and tender *Hippolita!* — I tell you, ſaid *Manfred* imperiouſly, *Hippolita* is no longer my wife, I divorce her from this hour. Too long has ſhe curſed me by her unfruitfulneſs: My fate depends on having ſons,—and this night I truſt will give a new date to my

hopes. At thoſe words he ſeized the cold hand of *Iſabella*, who was half-dead with fright and horror. She ſhrieked and ſtarted from him. *Manfred* roſe to purſue her, when the moon, which was now up and gleamed in at the oppoſite caſement, preſented to his ſight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which roſe to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempeſtuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and ruſtling ſound. *Iſabella*, who gathered courage from her ſituation, and who dreading nothing ſo much as *Manfred*'s purſuit of his declaration, cried, Look! My Lord, ſee, heaven itſelf declares againſt your impious intentions!—Heaven nor hell ſhall impede my deſigns, ſaid *Manfred*, advancing again to ſeize the Princeſs. At that inſtant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been ſitting, uttered a deep ſigh, and heaved its breaſt. *Iſabella*, whoſe back was turned to the picture, ſaw not the motion, nor knew whence the ſound came, but ſtarted, and ſaid, Hark, my Lord! What ſound was that?

and at the ſame time made towards the door, *Manfred*, diſtracted between the flight of *Iſabella*, who had now reached the ſtairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture which began to move, had however advanced ſome ſteps after her, ſtill looking backwards on the portrait, when he ſaw it quit its pannel, and deſcend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air. Do I dream? cried *Manfred* returning, or are the devils themſelves in league againſt me? ſpeak, infernal ſpectre! or, if thou art my grandſire, why doſt thou too conſpire againſt thy wretched deſcendant, who too dearly pays for —— e'er he could finiſh the ſentence, the viſion ſighed again, and made a ſign to *Manfred* to follow him. Lead on! cried *Manfred*; I will follow thee to the gulph of perdition. The ſpectre marched ſedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right-hand. *Manfred* accompanied him at a little diſtance, full of anxiety and horror, but reſolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped

to with violence by an inviſible hand. The Prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burſt open the door with his foot, but found that it reſiſted his utmoſt efforts. Since hell will not ſatisfy my curioſity, ſaid *Manfred*, I will uſe the human means in my power for preſerving my race; *Iſabella* ſhall not eſcape me.

That Lady, whoſe reſolution had given way to terror the moment ſhe had quitted *Manfred*, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal ſtaircaſe. There ſhe ſtopped, not knowing whither to direct her ſteps, nor how to eſcape from the impetuoſity of the Prince. The gates of the caſtle ſhe knew were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should ſhe, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare *Hippolita* for the cruel deſtiny that awaited her; ſhe did not doubt but *Manfred* would ſeek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he meditated, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuoſity of his paſ-

ſions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid meaſures he had conceived, or produce ſome circumſtance in her favour, if ſhe could for that night at leaſt avoid his odious purpoſe. ——Yet where conceal herſelf! how avoid the purſuit he would infallibly make throughout the caſtle! As theſe thoughts paſſed rapidly through her mind, ſhe recollected a ſubterraneous paſſage which led from the vaults of the caſtle to the church of St. *Nicholas*. Could ſhe reach the altar before ſhe was overtaken, ſhe knew even *Manfred*'s violence would not dare to profane the ſacredneſs of the place; and ſhe determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to ſhut herſelf up for ever among the holy virgins, whoſe convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this reſolution, ſhe ſeized a lamp that burned at the foot of the ſtaircaſe, and hurried towards the ſecret paſſage.

The lower part of the caſtle was hollowed into ſeveral intricate cloyſters; and it was not eaſy for one under ſo much anxiety to find the door

door that opened into the cavern. An awful ſilence reigned throughout thoſe ſubterraneous regions, except now and then ſome blaſts of wind that ſhook the doors ſhe had paſſed, and which grating on the ruſty hinges, were re-ecchoed through that long labyrinth of darkneſs. Every murmur ſtruck her with new terror;—yet more ſhe dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of *Manfred* urging his domeſtics to purſue her. She trod as ſoftly as impatience would give her leave,—yet frequently ſtopped and liſtened to hear if ſhe was followed. In one of thoſe moments ſhe thought ſhe heard a ſigh. She ſhuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment ſhe thought ſhe heard the ſtep of ſome perſon. Her blood curdled; ſhe concluded it was *Manfred*. Every ſuggeſtion that horror could inſpire ruſhed into her mind. She condemned her raſh flight, which had thus expoſed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw any body to her aſſiſtance.—Yet the ſound ſeemed not to come from

behind, — if *Manfred* knew where ſhe was, he muſt have followed her: She was ſtill in one of the cloyſters, and the ſteps ſhe had heard were too diſtinct to proceed from the way ſhe had come. Cheared with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince; ſhe was going to advance, when a door that ſtood a jar, at ſome diſtance to the left, was opened gently: But e'er her lamp, which ſhe held up, could diſcover who opened it, the perſon retreated precipitately on ſeeing the light.

Iſabella, whom every incident was ſufficient to diſmay, heſitated whether ſhe ſhould proceed. Her dread of *Manfred* ſoon outweighed every other terror. The very circumſtance of the perſon avoiding her, gave her a ſort of courage. It could only be, ſhe thought, ſome domeſtic belonging to the caſtle. Her gentleneſs had never raiſed her an enemy, and conſcious innocence made her hope that, unleſs ſent by the Prince's order to ſeek her, his ſervants would rather

rather aſſiſt than prevent her flight. Fortifying herſelf with theſe reflections, and believing by what ſhe could obſerve, that ſhe was near the mouth of the ſubterraneous cavern, ſhe approached the door that had been opened; but a ſudden guſt of wind that met her at the door, extinguiſhed her lamp, and left her in total darkneſs.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princeſs's ſituation. Alone in ſo diſmal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, hopeleſs of eſcaping, expecting every moment the arrival of *Manfred*, and far from tranquil on knowing ſhe was within reach of ſomebody, ſhe knew not whom, who for ſome cauſe ſeemed concealed thereabouts, all theſe thoughts crouded on her diſtracted mind, and ſhe was ready to ſink under her apprehenſions. She addreſſed herſelf to every Saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their aſſiſtance. For a conſiderable time ſhe remained in an agony of deſpair. At laſt, as ſoftly as was poſſible, ſhe felt

felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence ſhe had heard the ſigh and ſteps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonſhine gleam from the roof of the vault, which ſeemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, ſhe could not diſtinguiſh which, that appeared to have been cruſhed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chaſm, when ſhe diſcerned a human form ſtanding cloſe againſt the wall.

She ſhrieked, believing it the ghoſt of her betrothed *Conrad*. The figure advancing, ſaid in a ſubmiſſive voice, be not alarmed, Lady; I will not injure you. *Iſabella* a little encouraged by the words and tone of voice of the ſtranger, and recollecting that this muſt be the perſon who had opened the door, recovered her ſpirits enough to reply, Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched Princeſs, ſtanding on the brink of deſtruction: Aſſiſt me to eſcape from this fatal caſtle, or in few moments I may be made

made miſerable for ever. Alas! ſaid the ſtranger, what can I do to aſſiſt you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the caſtle, and want———Oh! ſaid *Iſabella*, haſtily interrupting him, help me but to find a trap-door that muſt be hereabout, and it is the greateſt ſervice you can do me, for I have not a minute to loſe. Saying theſe words, ſhe felt about on the pavement, and directed the ſtranger to ſearch likewiſe for a ſmooth piece of braſs incloſed in one of the ſtones. That, ſaid ſhe, is the lock, which opens with a ſpring, of which I know the ſecret. If we can find that, I may eſcape—if not, alas! courteous ſtranger, I fear, I ſhall have involved you in my misfortunes: *Manfred* will ſuſpect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his reſentment. I value not my life, ſaid the ſtranger, and it will be ſome comfort to loſe it, in trying to deliver you from his tyranny. Generous youth, ſaid *Iſabella*, how ſhall I ever requite——as ſhe uttered thoſe words, a ray of moonſhine ſtreaming

ſtreaming through a cranny of the ruin above ſhone directly on the lock they ſought—Oh! tranſport! ſaid *Iſabella*, here is the trap-door! and taking out a key, ſhe touched the ſpring, which ſtarting aſide, diſcovered an iron ring. Lift up the door, ſaid the Princeſs. The ſtranger obeyed; and beneath appeared ſome ſtone ſteps deſcending into a vault totally dark. We muſt go down here, ſaid *Iſabella*: Follow me; dark and diſmal as it is, we cannot miſs our way; it leads directly to the church of St. *Nicholas* — but perhaps, added the Princeſs modeſtly, you have no reaſon to leave the caſtle, nor have I farther occaſion for your ſervice; in few minutes I ſhall be ſafe from *Manfred*'s rage —only let me know to whom I am ſo much obliged. I will never quit you, ſaid the ſtranger eagerly, until I have placed you in ſafety—nor think me, Princeſs, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care——the ſtranger was interrupted by a ſudden noiſe of voices that ſeemed approaching, and they ſoon diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed theſe words: talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you ſhe muſt be in the caſtle; I will find her in ſpite of enchantment—Oh! heavens, cried *Iſabella*, it is the voice of *Manfred!* make haſte or we are ruined! and ſhut the trap-door after you. Saying this, ſhe deſcended the ſteps precipitately, and as the ſtranger haſtened to follow her, he let the door ſlip out of his hands: it fell, and the ſpring cloſed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having obſerved *Iſabella*'s method of touching the ſpring; nor had he many moments to make an eſſay. The noiſe of the falling door had been heard by *Manfred*, who directed by the ſound, haſtened thither, attended by his ſervants with torches. It muſt be *Iſabella*; cried *Manfred* before he entered the vault; ſhe is eſcaping by the ſubterraneous paſſage, but ſhe cannot have got far. —— What was the aſtoniſhment of the Prince, when, inſtead of *Iſabella*, the light of the torches diſcovered to him the young peaſant, whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet:

helmet: Traitor! ſaid *Manfred*, how cameſt thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court. I am no traitor, replied the young man boldly, nor am I anſwerable for your thoughts. Preſumptuous villain! cried *Manfred*, doſt thou provoke my wrath? tell me; how haſt thou eſcaped from above? thou haſt corrupted thy guards, and their lives ſhall anſwer it. My poverty, ſaid the peaſant calmly, will diſculpate them: Though the miniſters of a tyrant's wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjuſtly impoſed upon them. Art thou ſo hardy as to dare my vengeance? ſaid the Prince—but tortures ſhall force the truth from thee. Tell me, I will know thy accomplices. There was my accomplice! ſaid the youth ſmiling, and pointing to the roof. *Manfred* ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that one of the cheeks of the enchanted caſque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his ſervants had

let

let it fall over the peaſant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap through which the peaſant had preſſed himſelf ſome minutes before he was found by *Iſabella*. Was that the way by which thou didſt deſcend? ſaid *Manfred*. It was; ſaid the youth. But what noiſe was that, ſaid *Manfred*, which I heard as I entered the cloyſter? a door clapped: ſaid the peaſant; I heard it as well as you. What door? ſaid *Manfred* haſtily. I am not acquainted with your caſtle; ſaid the peaſant; this is the firſt time I ever entered it; and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was. But I tell thee, ſaid *Manfred* [wiſhing to find out if the youth had diſcovered the trap-door] it was this way I heard the noiſe: My ſervants heard it too—my Lord, interrupted one of them officiouſly, to be ſure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his eſcape. Peace! blockhead, ſaid the Prince angrily; if he was going to eſcape, how ſhould he come on this ſide? I will know from his

own

own mouth what noiſe it was I heard. Tell me truly; thy life depends on thy veracity. My veracity is dearer to me than my life; ſaid the peaſant; nor would I purchaſe the one by forfeiting the other. Indeed! young philoſopher! ſaid *Manfred* contemptuouſly; tell me then, what was the noiſe I heard? Aſk me what I can anſwer, ſaid he, and put me to death inſtantly if I tell you a lie. *Manfred* growing impatient at the ſteady valour and indifference of the youth, cried, Well then, thou man of truth! anſwer; was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard? It was; ſaid the youth. It was! ſaid the Prince; and how didſt thou come to know there was a trap-door here! I ſaw the plate of braſs by a gleam of moonſhine; replied he. But what told thee it was a lock? ſaid *Manfred*; How didſt thou diſcover the ſecret of opening it? Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the ſpring of a lock; ſaid he. Providence ſhould have gone a little farther, and have placed thee out of the reach of my reſentment,

ment, ſaid *Manfred:* When Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make uſe of its favours. Why didſt thou not purſue the path pointed out for thy eſcape? Why didſt thou ſhut the trap-door before thou hadſt deſcended the ſteps? I might aſk you, my Lord, ſaid the peaſant, how I, totally unacquainted with your caſtle, was to know that thoſe ſteps led to any outlet? but I ſcorn to evade your queſtions. Wherever thoſe ſteps lead to, perhaps I ſhould have explored the way—I could not be in a worſe ſituation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: Your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was ſeized a minute ſooner or a minute later? Thou art a reſolute villain for thy years; ſaid *Manfred*—yet on reflection I ſuſpect thou doſt but trifle with me: Thou haſt not yet told me how thou didſt open the lock. That I will ſhow you, my Lord; ſaid the peaſant, and taking up a frag-

ment of ſtone that had fallen from above, he laid himſelf on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of braſs that covered it; meaning to gain time for the eſcape of the Princeſs. This preſence of mind, joined to the frankneſs of the youth, ſtaggered *Manfred*. He even felt a diſpoſition towards pardoning one who had been guilty of no crime. *Manfred* was not one of thoſe ſavage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumſtances of his fortune had given an aſperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his paſſions did not obſcure his reaſon.

While the Prince was in this ſuſpence, a confuſed noiſe of voices ecchoed through the diſtant vaults. As the ſound approached, he diſtinguiſhed the clamours of ſome of his domeſtics, whom he had diſperſed through the caſtle in ſearch of *Iſabella*, calling out, where is my Lord? where is the Prince? Here I am; ſaid *Manfred*, as they came nearer; have you found

the Princeſs? the firſt that arrived, replied, oh! my Lord! I am glad we have found you—found me! ſaid *Manfred*; have you found the Princeſs! We thought we had, my Lord, ſaid the fellow, looking terrified—but — but what? cried the Prince; has ſhe eſcaped? — *Jaquez* and I, my Lord—yes, I and *Diego*, interrupted the ſecond, who came up in ſtill greater conſternation—ſpeak one of you at a time, ſaid *Manfred*; I aſk you where is the Princeſs? We do not know; ſaid they both together; but we are frightened out of our wits — ſo I think, blockheads, ſaid *Manfred*; what is it has ſcared you thus? — oh! my Lord, ſaid *Jaquez*, *Diego* has ſeen ſuch a ſight! your Highneſs would not believe our eyes—what new abſurdity is this! cried *Manfred*— give me a direct anſwer, or by heaven—why, my Lord, if it pleaſe your Highneſs to hear me, ſaid the poor fellow; *Diego* and I—yes I and *Jaquez*, cried his comrade—did not I forbid you to ſpeak both at a time? ſaid the Prince: You, *Jaquez*, anſwer;

for the other fool ſeems more diſtracted than thou art; what is the matter? my gracious Lord, ſaid *Jaquez*, if it pleaſe your Highneſs to hear me; *Diego* and I according to your Highneſs's orders went to ſearch for the young Lady; but being comprehenſive that we might meet the ghoſt of my young Lord, your Highneſs's ſon, God reſt his ſoul, as he has not received chriſtian burial—ſot! cried *Manfred* in a rage, is it only a ghoſt then that thou haſt ſeen? oh! worſe! worſe! my Lord, cried *Diego:* I had rather have ſeen ten whole ghoſts—grant me patience! ſaid *Manfred*; theſe blockheads diſtract me—out of my ſight, *Diego!* and thou *Jaquez*, tell me in one word, art thou ſober? art thou raving? thou waſt wont to have ſome ſenſe: has the other ſot frightened himſelf and thee too! ſpeak; what is it he fancies he has ſeen? Why, my Lord, replied *Jaquez* trembling, I was going to tell your Highneſs, that ſince the calamitous misfortune of my young Lord, God reſt his precious ſoul! not one of us your Highneſs's

Highneſs's faithful ſervants, indeed we are, my Lord, though poor men; I ſay, not one of us has dared to ſet a foot about the caſtle, but two together: So *Diego* and I, thinking that my young Lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your Highneſs wanted ſomething to impart to her— O blundering fools! cried *Manfred:* And in the mean time ſhe has made her eſcape, becauſe you were afraid of goblins! — Why, thou knave! ſhe left me in the gallery; I came from thence myſelf. For all that, ſhe may be there ſtill for ought I know ſaid *Jaquez*; but the devil ſhall have me before I ſeek her there again!—poor *Diego!* I do not believe he will ever recover it! recover what? ſaid *Manfred*; am I never to learn what it is has terrified theſe raſcals? — but I loſe my time; follow me ſlave; I will ſee if ſhe is in the gallery —— for heaven's ſake, my dear good Lord, cried *Jaquez*, do not go to the gallery! Satan himſelf I believe is in the great chamber next to the gallery —— *Manfred*, who hitherto had treated the

terror of his ſervants as an idle panic, was ſtruck at this new circumſtance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the ſudden cloſing of the door at the end of the gallery — his voice faltered, and he asked with diſorder, what is in the great chamber? my Lord, ſaid *Jaquez*, when *Diego* and I came into the gallery, he went firſt, for he ſaid he had more courage than I. So when we came into the gallery, we found nobody. We looked under every bench and ſtool; and ſtill we found nobody—were all the pictures in their places? ſaid *Manfred*. Yes, my Lord, anſwered *Jaquez*; but we did not think of looking behind them—well, well! ſaid *Manfred*, proceed. When we came to the door of the great chamber, continued *Jaquez*, we found it ſhut—and could not you open it? ſaid *Manfred*. Oh! yes, my Lord, would to heaven we had not! replied he—nay, it was not I neither, it was *Diego:* he was grown fool-hardy, and would go on, though I adviſed him not — if ever I open a door that is ſhut again—trifle

not,

not, ſaid *Manfred* ſhuddering, but tell me what you ſaw in the great chamber on opening the door — I! my Lord! ſaid *Jaquez*, I ſaw nothing; I was behind *Diego*; — but I heard the noiſe——*Jaquez*, ſaid *Manfred* in a ſolemn tone of voice; tell me I adjure thee by the ſouls of my anceſtors, what was it thou ſaweſt? what was it thou heardſt? It was *Diego* ſaw it, my Lord, it was not I; replied *Jaquez*; I only heard the noiſe. *Diego* had no ſooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back—I ran back too, and ſaid, it is the ghoſt? the ghoſt! no, no, ſaid *Diego*, and his hair ſtood an end—it is a giant I believe; he is all clad in armour, for I ſaw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court. As he ſaid theſe words, my Lord, we heard a violent motion and the rattling of armour, as if the giant was riſing, for *Diego* has told me ſince, that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were ſtretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to

the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to ſee if the giant was following us—yet now I think on it, we muſt have heard him if he had purſued us——but for heaven's ſake, good my Lord, ſend for the chaplain and have the caſtle exorciſed, for, for certain, it is enchanted. Ay, pray do, my Lord, cried all the ſervants at once, or we muſt leave your Highneſs's ſervice—peace! dotards; ſaid *Manfred*, and follow me; I will know what all this means. We! my Lord! cried they with one voice, we would not go up to the gallery for your Highneſs's revenue. The young peaſant, who had ſtood ſilent, now ſpoke. Will your Highneſs, ſaid he, permit me to try this adventure? my life is of conſequence to nobody: I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one. Your behaviour is above your ſeeming; ſaid *Manfred*, viewing him with ſurpriſe and admiration—— hereafter I will reward your bravery—but now, continued he with a ſigh,

I am

I am ſo circumſtanced, that I dare truſt no eyes but my own — however, I give you leave to accompany me.

Manfred, when he firſt followed *Iſabella* from the gallery, had gone directly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the Princeſs had retired thither. *Hippolita*, who knew his ſtep, roſe with anxious fondneſs to meet her Lord, whom ſhe had not ſeen ſince the death of their ſon. She would have flown in a tranſport mixed of joy and grief to his boſom, but he puſhed her rudely off, and ſaid, Where is *Iſabella? Iſabella!* My Lord! ſaid the aſtoniſhed *Hippolita*. Yes; *Iſabella*; cried *Manfred* imperiouſly; I want *Iſabella*. My Lord, replied *Matilda*, who perceived how much his behaviour had ſhocked her mother, ſhe has not been with us ſince your Highneſs ſummoned her to your apartment. Tell me where ſhe is; ſaid the Prince; I do not want to know where ſhe has been. My good Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*, your daughter tells you the truth: *Iſabella* left us by your command,

mand, and has not returned ſince; — but, my good Lord, compoſe yourſelf: Retire to your reſt: This diſmal day has diſordered you. *Iſabella* ſhall wait your orders in the morning. What then, you know where ſhe is! cried *Manfred:* Tell me directly, for I will not loſe an inſtant — and you, woman, ſpeaking to his wife, order your chaplain to attend me forthwith. *Iſabella*, ſaid *Hippolita* calmly, is retired, I ſuppoſe to her chamber: She is not accuſtomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my Lord, continued ſhe, let me know what has diſturbed you: Has *Iſabella* offended you? Trouble me not with queſtions, ſaid *Manfred*, but tell me where ſhe is. *Matilda* ſhall call her ſaid the Princeſs——Sit down, my Lord, and reſume your wonted fortitude.—What, art thou jealous of *Iſabella*, replied he, that you wiſh to be preſent at our interview? Good heavens! my Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*, what is it your Highneſs means? Thou wilt know ere many minutes are paſſed; ſaid the cruel Prince. Send

your

your chaplain to me, and wait my pleaſure here. At theſe words he flung out of the room in ſearch of *Iſabella:* leaving the amazed Ladies thunder-ſtruck with his words and frantic deportment, and loſt in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

Manfred was now returning from the vault, attended by the peaſant and a few of his ſervants whom he had obliged to accompany him. He aſcended the ſtair-caſe without ſtopping till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he met *Hippolita* and her chaplain. When *Diego* had been diſmiſſed by *Manfred*, he had gone directly to the Princeſs's apartment with the alarm of what he had ſeen. That excellent Lady, who no more than *Manfred*, doubted of the reality of the viſion, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the ſervant. Willing, however, to ſave her Lord from any additional ſhock, and prepared by a ſeries of grief not to tremble at any acceſſion to it; ſhe determined to make herſelf the firſt ſacrifice, if fate had marked the preſent

preſent hour for their deſtruction. Diſmiſſing the reluctant *Matilda* to her reſt, who in vain ſued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, *Hippolita* had viſited the gallery and great chamber; and now with more ſerenity of ſoul than ſhe had felt for many hours, ſhe met her Lord, and aſſured him that the viſion of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impreſſion made by fear, and the dark and diſmal hour of the night on the minds of his ſervants. She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found every thing in the uſual order.

Manfred, though perſuaded, like his wife, that the viſion had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempeſt of mind into which ſo many ſtrange events had thrown him. Aſhamed too of his inhuman treatment of a Princeſs, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderneſs and duty; he felt returning love forcing itſelf into his eyes—but not leſs aſhamed of feeling remorſe towards one, againſt whom he

he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage; he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next tranſition of his ſoul was to exquiſite villainy. Preſuming on the unſhaken ſubmiſſion of *Hippolita*, he flattered himſelf that ſhe would not only acquieſce with patience to a divorce, but would obey if it was his pleaſure, in endeavouring to perſuade *Iſabella* to give him her hand —but e'er he could indulge this horrid hope, he reflected that *Iſabella* was not to be found. Coming to himſelf, he gave orders that every avenue to the caſtle ſhould be ſtrictly guarded, and charged his domeſtics on pain of their lives to ſuffer nobody to paſs out. The young peaſant, to whom he ſpoke favourably, he ordered to remain in a ſmall chamber on the ſtairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himſelf, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then diſmiſſing his attendants, and beſtowing a ſullen kind of half-nod on *Hippolita*, he retired to his own chamber.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

MATILDA, who by *Hippolita*'s order, had retired to her apartment, was ill-diſpoſed to take any reſt. The ſhocking fate of her brother had deeply affected her. She was ſurprized at not ſeeing *Iſabella*: But the ſtrange words which had fallen from her father, and his obſcure menace to the Princeſs his wife, accompanied by the moſt furious behaviour, had filled her gentle mind with terror and alarm. She waited anxiouſly for the return of *Bianca*, a young damſel that attended her, whom ſhe had ſent to learn what was become of *Iſabella*. *Bianca* ſoon appeared and informed her miſtreſs of what ſhe had gathered from the ſervants, that *Iſabella* was no where to be found. She related the adventure of the young peaſant, who had

had been diſcovered in the vault, tho' with many ſimple additions from the incoherent accounts of the domeſtics; and ſhe dwelled principally on the gigantic leg and foot which had been ſeen in the gallery-chamber. This laſt circumſtance had terrified *Bianca* ſo much, that ſhe was rejoiced when *Matilda* told her that ſhe would not go to reſt, but would watch till the Princeſs ſhould riſe.

The young Princeſs wearied herſelf in conjectures on the flight of *Iſabella*, and on the threats of *Manfred* to her mother. But what buſineſs could he have ſo urgent with the chaplain? ſaid *Matilda*. Does he intend to have my brother's body interred privately in the chapel? Oh! Madam, ſaid *Bianca*, now I gueſs. As you are become his heireſs, he is impatient to have you married: He has always been raving for more ſons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandſons. As ſure as I live, Madam, I ſhall ſee you a bride at laſt—Good Madam, you won't caſt off your faithful *Bianca*: You won't

put

put *Donna Roſara* over me, now you are a great Princeſs. My poor *Bianca*, ſaid *Matilda*, how faſt your thoughts amble! I a great Princeſs! What haſt thou ſeen in *Manfred*'s behaviour ſince my brother's death that beſpeaks any increaſe of tenderneſs to me? No, *Bianca*; his heart was ever a ſtranger to me—but he is my father, and I muſt not complain. Nay, if heaven ſhuts my father's heart againſt me, it overpays my little merit in the tenderneſs of my mother——O that dear mother! yes, *Bianca*, 'tis there I feel the rugged temper of *Manfred*. I can ſupport his harſhneſs to me with patience; but it wounds my ſoul when I am witneſs to his cauſeleſs ſeverity towards her. Oh! Madam, ſaid *Bianca*, all men uſe their wives ſo, when they are weary of them—and yet you congratulated me but now, ſaid *Matilda*, when you fancied my father intended to diſpoſe of me. I would have you a great Lady, replied *Bianca*, come what will. I do not wiſh to ſee you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will,

will, and if my Lady, your mother, who knows that a bad huſband is better than no huſband at all, did not hinder you—bleſs me! what noiſe is that! St. *Nicholas* forgive me! I was but in jeſt. It is the wind, ſaid *Matilda*, whiſtling through the battlements in the tower above: You have heard it a thouſand times. Nay, ſaid *Bianca*, there was no harm neither in what I ſaid: It is no ſin to talk of matrimony——and ſo, Madam, as I was ſaying; if my Lord *Manfred* ſhould offer you a handſome young Prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a curtſy, and tell him you would rather take the veil. Thank heaven! I am in no ſuch danger, ſaid *Matilda:* You know how many propoſals for me he has rejected——and you thank him, like a dutiful daughter, do you, Madam?——but come, Madam; ſuppoſe, to-morrow morning he was to ſend for you to the great council chamber, and there you ſhould find at his elbow a lovely young Prince, with large black eyes, a ſmooth white forehead, and manly curling

locks like jet; in ſhort, Madam, a young Hero reſembling the picture of the good *Alfonſo* in the gallery, which you ſit and gaze at for hours together—do not ſpeak lightly of that picture, interrupted *Matilda* ſighing: I know the adoration with which I look at that picture is uncommon—but I am not in love with a coloured pannel. The character of that virtuous Prince, the veneration with which my mother has inſpired me for his memory, the oriſons which I know not why ſhe has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to perſuade me that ſome how or other my deſtiny is linked with ſomething relating to him—Lord! Madam, how ſhould that be? ſaid *Bianca:* I have always heard that your family was no way related to his: And I am ſure I cannot conceive why my Lady, the Princeſs, ſends you in a cold morning or a damp evening to pray at his tomb: He is no Saint by the *Almanack.* If you muſt pray, why does not ſhe bid you addreſs yourſelf to our great St. *Nicholas?* I am ſure he

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is the Saint I pray to for a huſband. Perhaps my mind would be leſs affected, ſaid *Matilda*, if my mother would explain her reaſons to me: But it is the myſtery ſhe obſerves, that inſpires me with this—I know not what to call it. As ſhe never acts from caprice, I am ſure there is ſome fatal ſecret at bottom—nay, I know there is: In her agony of grief for my brother's death ſhe dropped ſome words that intimated as much —oh! dear Madam, cried *Bianca*, What were they? No; ſaid *Matilda*, if a parent lets fall a word, and wiſhes it recalled, it is not for a child to utter it. What! was ſhe ſorry for what ſhe had ſaid? aſked *Bianca*.—I am ſure, Madam, you may truſt me——with my own little ſecrets, when I have any, I may; ſaid *Matilda*; but never with my mother's: A child ought to have no ears or eyes, but as a parent directs. Well! to be ſure, Madam, you was born to be a ſaint, ſaid *Bianca*, and there is no reſiſting one's vocation: You will end in a convent at laſt. But there is my Lady *Iſabella*

would not be ſo reſerved to me: She will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handſome cavalier has come to the caſtle, ſhe has owned to me that ſhe wiſhed your brother *Conrad* reſembled him. *Bianca*, ſaid the Princeſs, I do not allow you to mention my friend diſreſpectfully. *Iſabella* is of a chearful diſpoſition, but her ſoul is pure as virtue itſelf. She knows your idle babling humour, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the ſolitude in which my father keeps us —— Bleſſed *Mary!* ſaid *Bianca* ſtarting, there it is again! — dear Madam, Do you hear nothing? —— this caſtle is certainly haunted! — peace! ſaid *Matilda*, and liſten! I did think I heard a voice—but it muſt be fancy; your terrors, I ſuppoſe, have infected me. Indeed! indeed! Madam, ſaid *Bianca*, half-weeping with agony, I am ſure I heard a voice. Does any body lie in the chamber beneath? ſaid the Princeſs. Nobody has dared to lie there, anſwered *Bianca*, ſince the great aſtrologer that was your

brother's tutor, drowned himſelf. For certain, Madam, his ghoſt and the young Prince's are now met in the chamber below——for heaven's ſake let us fly to your mother's apartment! I charge you not to ſtir; ſaid *Matilda*. If they are ſpirits in pain, we may eaſe their ſufferings by queſtioning them. They can mean no hurt to us, for we have not injured them — and if they ſhould, ſhall we be more ſafe in one chamber than in another? Reach me my beads; we will ſay a prayer, and then ſpeak to them. Oh! dear Lady, I would not ſpeak to a ghoſt for the world; cried *Bianca* — as ſhe ſaid thoſe words, they heard the caſement of the little chamber below *Matilda*'s open. They liſtened attentively, and in few minutes thought they heard a perſon ſing, but could not diſtinguiſh the words. This can be no evil ſpirit; ſaid the Princeſs in a low voice: It is undoubtedly one of the family — open the window, and we ſhall know the voice. I dare not indeed, Madam; ſaid *Bianca*. Thou art a very fool; ſaid *Matilda*, opening the window gently herſelf. The noiſe

the Princeſs made was however heard by the perſon beneath, who ſtopped; and they concluded had heard the caſement open. Is any body below? ſaid the Princeſs: If there is, ſpeak. Yes; ſaid an unknown voice. Who is it? ſaid *Matilda*. A ſtranger; replied the voice. What ſtranger? ſaid ſhe; and how didſt thou come there at this unuſual hour, when all the gates of the caſtle are locked? I am not here willingly: Anſwered the voice —— but pardon me, Lady, if I have diſturbed your reſt: I knew not that I was overheard. Sleep had forſaken me: I left a reſtleſs couch, and came to waſte the irkſome hours with gazing on the fair approach of morning, impatient to be diſmiſſed from this caſtle. Thy words and accents, ſaid *Matilda*, are of a melancholy caſt: If thou art unhappy, I pity thee. If poverty afflicts thee, let me know it: I will mention thee to the Princeſs, whoſe beneficent ſoul ever melts for the diſtreſſed; and ſhe will relieve thee. I am indeed unhappy, ſaid the ſtranger; and I know not what wealth is: But I do not complain of the

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lot which heaven has caſt for me: I am young and healthy, and am not aſhamed of owing my ſupport to myſelf—yet think me not proud, or that I diſdain your generous offers. I will remember you in my oriſons, and will pray for bleſſings on your gracious ſelf and your noble miſtreſs—if I ſigh, Lady, it is for others, not for myſelf. Now I have it, Madam; ſaid *Bianca*, whiſpering the Princeſs. This is certainly the young peaſant; and by my conſcience he is in love——Well! this is a charming adventure! —do, Madam, let us ſift him. He does not know you, but takes you for one of my Lady *Hippolita*'s women. Art thou not aſhamed, *Bianca!* ſaid the Princeſs: What right have we to pry into the ſecrets of this young man's heart? he ſeems virtuous and frank, and tells us he is unhappy: Are thoſe circumſtances that authorize us to make a property of him? how are we intitled to his confidence? Lord! Madam, how little you know of love! replied *Bianca*: Why lovers have no pleaſure equal to

talking of their miſtreſs. And would you have *me* become a peaſant's confident? ſaid the Princeſs. Well then, let me talk to him: Said *Bianca:* Though I have the honour of being your Highneſs's maid of honour, I was not always ſo great: Beſides, if love levels ranks, it raiſes them too: I have a reſpect for any young man in love—peace! ſimpleton; ſaid the Princeſs. Though he ſaid he was unhappy, it does not follow that he muſt be in love. Think of all that has happened to-day, and tell me if there are no misfortunes but what love cauſes. Stranger, reſumed the Princeſs, if thy misfortunes have not been occaſioned by thy own fault, and are within the compaſs of the Princeſs *Hippolita*'s power to redreſs, I will take upon me to anſwer that ſhe will be thy protectreſs. When thou art diſmiſſed from this caſtle, repair to holy father *Jerome* at the convent adjoining to the church of St. *Nicholas*, and make thy ſtory known to him, as far as thou thinkeſt meet: He will not fail to inform the Princeſs, who is

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the mother of all that want her aſſiſtance. Farewel: It is not ſeemly for me to hold farther converſe with a man at this unwonted hour. May the Saints guard thee, gracious Lady! replied the peaſant—but oh! if a poor and worthleſs ſtranger might preſume to beg a minute's audience farther——am I ſo happy?—the caſement is not ſhut—might I venture to aſk—ſpeak quickly; ſaid *Matilda*; the morning dawns a pace: Should the labourers come into the fields and perceive us—What wouldſt thou aſk?—I know not how—I know not if I dare—ſaid the young ſtranger faltering——yet the humanity with which you have ſpoken to me emboldens—Lady! dare I truſt you?—Heavens! ſaid *Matilda*, What doſt thou mean? with what wouldſt thou truſt me?—ſpeak boldly, if thy ſecret is fit to be entruſted to a virtuous breaſt——I would aſk, ſaid the peaſant, recollecting himſelf, whether what I have heard from the domeſtics is true, that the Princeſs is miſſing from the caſtle? What imports it to thee to know?

know? replied *Matilda.* Thy firſt words beſpoke a prudent and becoming gravity. Doſt thou come hither to pry into the ſecrets of *Manfred?*--Adieu. I have been miſtaken in thee. Saying theſe words, ſhe ſhut the caſement haſtily, without giving the young man time to reply. I had acted more wiſely, ſaid the Princeſs to *Bianca* with ſome ſharpneſs, if I had let thee converſe with this peaſant: His inquiſitiveneſs ſeems of a piece with thy own. It is not fit for me to argue with your Highneſs, replied *Bianca*; but perhaps the queſtions I ſhould have put to him, would have been more to the purpoſe, than thoſe you have been pleaſed to aſk him. Oh! no doubt; ſaid *Matilda*; you are a very diſcreet perſonage! may I know what *you* would have aſked him? A by-ſtander often ſees more of the game than thoſe that play: anſwered *Bianca.* Does your Highneſs think, Madam, that his queſtion about my Lady *Iſabella* was the reſult of mere curioſity? No, no, Madam; there is more in it than you great folks

folks are aware of. *Lopez* told me that all the ſervants believe this youug fellow contrived my Lady *Iſabella*'s eſcape — now, pray, Madam, obſerve——you and I both know that my Lady *Iſabella* never much fancied the Prince your brother——Well! he is killed juſt in the critical minute—I accuſe nobody. A helmet falls from the moon—ſo, my Lord, your father ſays; but *Lopez* and all the ſervants ſay that this young ſpark is a magician, and ſtole it from *Alfonſo*'s tomb—have done with this rhapſody of impertinence, ſaid *Matilda*. Nay, Madam, as you pleaſe; cried *Bianca*—yet it is very particular tho', that my Lady *Iſabella* ſhould be miſſing the very ſame day, and that this young ſorcerer ſhould be found at the mouth of the trap-door —I accuſe nobody——but if my young Lord came honeſtly by his death—Dare not on thy duty, ſaid *Matilda*, to breathe a ſuſpicion on the purity of my dear *Iſabella*'s fame—purity, or not purity, ſaid *Bianca*, gone ſhe is—a ſtranger is found that nobody knows: You queſtion him yourſelf:

yourſelf: He tells you he is in love, or unhappy, it is the ſame thing—nay; he owned he was unhappy about others; and is any body unhappy about another, unleſs they are in love with them? and at the very next word, he aſks innocently, poor ſoul! if my Lady *Iſabella* is miſſing—to be ſure, ſaid *Matilda*, thy obſervations are not totally without foundation—*Iſabella*'s flight amazes me: The curioſity of this ſtranger is very particular—yet *Iſabella* never concealed a thought from me—ſo ſhe told you, ſaid *Bianca*, to fiſh out your ſecrets—but who knows, Madam, but this ſtranger may be ſome Prince in diſguiſe?—do, Madam, let me open the window, and aſk him a few queſtions. No, replied, *Matilda*, I will aſk him myſelf, if he knows aught of *Iſabella:* He is not worthy that I ſhould converſe farther with him. She was going to open the caſement, when they heard the bell ring at the poſtern-gate of the caſtle, which is on the right hand of the tower, where

Matilda

Matilda lay. This prevented the Princeſs from renewing the converſation with the ſtranger.

After continuing ſilent for ſome time; I am perſuaded, ſaid ſhe to *Bianca*, that whatever be the cauſe of *Iſabella*'s flight, it had no unworthy motive. If this ſtranger was acceſſary to it, ſhe muſt be ſatisfied of his fidelity and worth. I obſerved, did not you, *Bianca?* that his words were tinctured with an uncommon infuſion of piety. It was no ruffian's ſpeech: His phraſes were becoming a man of gentle birth. I told you, Madam, ſaid *Bianca*, that I was ſure he was ſome Prince in diſguiſe—yet, ſaid *Matilda*, if he was privy to her eſcape, how will you account for his not accompanying her in her flight? why expoſe himſelf unneceſſarily and raſhly to my Father's reſentment? As for that, Madam, replied ſhe, if he could get from under the helmet, he will find ways of eluding your Father's anger. I do not doubt but he has ſome taliſman or other about him—You reſolve every thing into magic; ſaid *Matilda*—but a man who has

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any intercourſe with infernal ſpirits, does not dare to make uſe of thoſe tremendous and holy words, which he uttered. Didſt thou not obſerve with what fervour he vowed to remember *me* to heaven in his prayers?—yes; *Iſabella* was undoubtedly convinced of his piety. Commend me to the piety of a young fellow and a damſel that conſult to elope? ſaid *Bianca*. No, no, Madam; my Lady *Iſabella* is of another gueſs mould than you take her for. She uſed indeed to ſigh and lift up her eyes in your company, becauſe ſhe knows you are a Saint—but when your back was turned—You wrong her; ſaid *Matilda: Iſabella* is no hypocrite: She has a due ſenſe of devotion, but never affected a call ſhe has not. On the contrary, ſhe always combated my inclination for the cloyſter: And though I own the myſtery ſhe has made to me of her flight, confounds me; though it ſeems inconſiſtent with the friendſhip between us; I cannot forget the diſintereſted warmth with which ſhe always oppoſed my taking the veil: She wiſhed

wiſhed to ſee me married, though my dower would have been a loſs to her and my brother's children. For her ſake I will believe well of this young peaſant. Then you do think there is ſome liking between them; ſaid *Bianca*—While ſhe was ſpeaking, a ſervant came haſtily into the chamber and told the Princeſs, that the Lady *Iſabella* was found. Where? ſaid *Matilda*. She has taken ſanctuary in St. *Nicholas's* church; replied the ſervant: Father *Jerome* has brought the news himſelf: he is below with his Highneſs. Where is my Mother! ſaid *Matilda*. She is in her own chamber, Madam, and has aſked for you.

Manfred had riſen at the firſt dawn of light, and gone to *Hippolita*'s apartment, to inquire if ſhe knew ought of *Iſabella*. While he was queſtioning her, word was brought that *Jerome* demanded to ſpeak with him. *Manfred*, little ſuſpecting the cauſe of the Friar's arrival, and knowing he was employed by *Hippolita* in her charities, ordered him to be admitted, intending

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to leave them together, while he purſued his ſearch after *Iſabella*. Is your buſineſs with me or the Princeſs? ſaid *Manfred*. With both. Replied the holy man. The Lady *Iſabella*— what of her! interrupted *Manfred* eagerly— is at St. *Nicholas*'s altar, replied *Jerome*. That is no buſineſs of *Hippolita*; ſaid *Manfred* with confuſion: let us retire to my chamber, Father; and inform me how ſhe came thither. No; my Lord; replied the good man with an air of firmneſs and authority, that daunted even the reſolute *Manfred*, who could not help revering the ſaint-like virtues of *Jerome*: My commiſſion is to both; and with your Highneſs's good-liking, in the preſence of both I ſhall deliver it—but firſt, my Lord, I muſt interrogate the Princeſs, whether ſhe is acquainted with the cauſe of the Lady *Iſabella*'s retirement from your caſtle—no, on my ſoul; ſaid *Hippolita:* does *Iſabella* charge me with being privy to it?—Father, interrupted *Manfred*, I pay due reverence to your holy profeſſion; but I am ſovereign here, and

and will allow no meddling prieſt to interfere in the affairs of my domeſtic. If you have ought to ſay, attend me to my chamber—I do not uſe to let my Wife be acquainted with the ſecret affairs of my State; they are not within a woman's province. My Lord, ſaid the holy man, I am no intruder into the ſecrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal diviſions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headſtrong paſſions. I forgive your Highneſs's uncharitable apoſtrophe: I know my duty, and am the miniſter of a mightier prince than *Manfred*. Hearken to him who ſpeaks through my organs. *Manfred* trembled with rage and ſhame. *Hippolita*'s countenance declared her aſtoniſhment and impatience to know where this would end: her ſilence more ſtrongly ſpoke her obſervance of *Manfred*.

The Lady *Iſabella*, reſumed *Jerome*, commends herſelf to both your Highneſſes; ſhe thanks both for the kindneſs with which ſhe has been treated in your caſtle: She deplores the loſs of your ſon, and her own misfortune in not be-

coming the daughter of ſuch wiſe and noble Princes, whom ſhe ſhall always reſpect as *Parents*; ſhe prays for uninterrupted union and felicity between you: [*Manfred*'s colour changed] but as it is no longer poſſible for her to be allied to you, ſhe intreats your conſent to remain in ſanctuary, till ſhe can learn news of her father, or, by the certainty of his death, be at liberty, with the approbation of her guardians, to diſpoſe of herſelf in ſuitable marriage. I ſhall give no ſuch conſent; ſaid the Prince, but inſiſt on her return to the caſtle without delay: I am anſwerable for her perſon to her guardians, and will not brook her being in any hands but my own. Your Highneſs will recollect whether that can any longer be proper: replied the Friar. I want no monitor, ſaid *Manfred* colouring. *Iſabella*'s conduct leaves room for ſtrange ſuſpicions — and that young villain, who was at leaſt the accomplice of her flight, if not the cauſe of it —— the cauſe! interrupted *Jerome*; was a young man the cauſe! This is not to be borne! cried *Manfred*. Am I to be bearded in my

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own palace by an insolent Monk! thou art privy, I guess, to their amours. I would pray to heaven to clear up your uncharitable surmizes, said *Jerome*, if your Highness were not satisfied in your conscience how unjustly you accuse me. I do pray to heaven to pardon that uncharitableness: And I implore your Highness to leave the Princess at peace in that holy place, where she is not liable to be disturbed by such vain and worldly fantasies as discourses of love from any man. Cant not to me, said *Manfred*, but return and bring the Princess to her duty. It is my duty to prevent her return hither; said *Jerome*. She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence. I am her parent, cried *Manfred*, and demand her. She wished to have you for her parent; said the Friar: But heaven that forbad that connection, has for ever dissolved all ties betwixt you: And I announce to your Highness —— stop! audacious man, said *Manfred*, and dread my displeasure. Holy father, said *Hip-*

polita, it is your office to be no reſpecter of perſons: you muſt ſpeak as your duty preſcribes: But it is my duty to hear nothing that it pleaſes not my Lord I ſhould hear. Attend the Prince to his chamber. I will retire to my oratory, and pray to the bleſſed virgin to inſpire you with her holy councils, and to reſtore the heart of my gracious Lord to its wonted peace and gentleneſs. Excellent woman! ſaid the Friar—my Lord, I attend your pleaſure.

Manfred, accompanied by the Friar, paſſed to his own apartment, where ſhutting the door, I perceive, father, ſaid he, that *Iſabella* has acquainted you with my purpoſe. Now hear my reſolve, and obey. Reaſons of ſtate, moſt urgent reaſons, my own and the ſafety of my people, demand that I ſhould have a ſon. It is in vain to expect an heir from *Hippolita*. I have made choice of *Iſabella*. You muſt bring her back; and you muſt do more. I know the influence you have with *Hippolita*: her conſcience is in your hands. She is, I allow, a faultleſs

faultleſs woman: Her ſoul is ſet on heaven, and ſcorns the little grandeur of this world: you can withdraw her from it intirely. Perſuade her to conſent to the diſſolution of our marriage, and to retire into a monaſtery—ſhe ſhall endow one if ſhe will; and ſhe ſhall have the means of being as liberal to your order as ſhe or you can wiſh. Thus you will divert the calamities that are hanging over our heads, and have the merit of ſaving the principality of *Otranto* from deſtruction. You are a prudent man, and though the warmth of my temper betrayed me into ſome unbecoming expreſſions, I honour your virtue, and wiſh to be indebted to you for the repoſe of my life and the preſervation of my family.

The will of heaven be done! ſaid the Friar. I am but its worthleſs inſtrument. It makes uſe of my tongue, to tell thee, Prince, of thy unwarrantable deſigns. The injuries of the virtuous *Hippolita* have mounted to the throne of pity. By me thou art reprimanded for thy

adulterous intention of repudiating her: By me thou art warned not to purſue the inceſtuous deſign on thy contracted daughter. Heaven that delivered her from thy fury, when the judgments ſo recently fallen on thy houſe ought to have inſpired thee with other thoughts, will continue to watch over her. Even I, a poor and deſpiſed Friar, am able to protect her from thy violence —', ſinner as I am, and uncharitably reviled by your Highneſs, as an accomplice of I know not what amours, ſcorn the allurements with which it has pleaſed thee to tempt mine honeſty. I love my order; I honour devout ſouls; I reſpect the piety of thy Princeſs—but I will not betray the confidence ſhe repoſes in me, nor ſerve even the cauſe of religion by foul and ſinful compliances—but for ſooth! the welfare of the ſtate depends on your Highneſs having a ſon. Heaven mocks the ſhort-ſighted views of man. But yeſter-morn, whoſe houſe was ſo great, ſo flouriſhing as *Manfred*'s?—where is young *Conrad* now!—my Lord, I

reſpect

respect your tears — but I mean not to check them — let them flow, Prince! they will weigh more with heaven towards the welfare of thy subjects, than a marriage, which, founded on lust or policy, could never prosper. The sceptre, which passed from the race of *Alfonso* to thine, cannot be preserved by a match which the church will never allow. It is the will of the most High that *Manfred*'s name must perish; resign yourself, my Lord, to its decrees; and thus deserve a crown that can never pass away— come, my Lord; I like this sorrow—let us return to the Princess: She is not apprized of your cruel intentions; nor did I mean more than to alarm you. You saw with what gentle patience, with what efforts of love, she heard, she rejected hearing the extent of your guilt. I know she longs to fold you in her arms, and assure you of her unalterable affection. Father, said the Prince, you mistake my compunction: true; I honour *Hippolita*'s virtue, think her a Saint; and wish it were for my soul's health

to tie faſter the knot that has united us—but alas! Father, you know not the bittereſt of my pangs! it is ſome time that I have had ſcruples on the legality of our union: *Hippolita* is related to me in the fourth degree—it is true, we had a diſpenſation: But I have been informed that ſhe had alſo been contracted to another. This it is that ſits heavy at my heart: To this ſtate of unlawful wedlock I impute the viſitation that has fallen on me in the death of *Conrad!*—eaſe my conſcience of this burden: diſſolve our marriage, and accompliſh the work of godlineſs which your divine exhortations have commenced in my ſoul.

How cutting was the anguiſh which the good man felt, when he perceived this turn in the wily Prince! He trembled for *Hippolita*, whoſe ruin he ſaw was determined; and he feared if *Manfred* had no hope of recovering *Iſabella*, that his impatience for a ſon would direct him to ſome other object, who might not be equally proof againſt the temptation

of

of *Manfred*'s rank. For ſome time the holy man remained abſorbed in thought. At length, conceiving ſome hope from delay, he thought the wiſeſt conduct would be to prevent the Prince from deſpairing of recovering *Iſabella*. Her the Friar knew he could diſpoſe, from her affection to *Hippolita*, and from the averſion ſhe had expreſſed to him for *Manfred*'s addreſſes, to ſecond his views, till the cenſures of the church could be fulminated againſt a divorce. With this intention, as if ſtruck with the Prince's ſcruples, he at length ſaid; my Lord, I have been pondering on what your Highneſs has ſaid; and if in truth it is delicacy of conſcience that is the real motive of your repugnance to your virtuous Lady, far be it from me to endeavour to harden your heart. The church is an indulgent mother: unfold your griefs to her: ſhe alone can adminiſter comfort to your ſoul, either by ſatisfying your conſcience, or upon examination of your ſcruples, by ſetting you at liberty, and indulging you in the lawful means

means of continuing your lineage. In the latter case, if the Lady *Isabella* can be brought to consent —— *Manfred*, who concluded that he had either over-reached the good man, or that his first warmth had been but a tribute paid to appearance, was overjoyed at his sudden turn, and repeated the most magnificent promises, if he should succeed by the Friar's mediation. The well-meaning Priest suffered him to deceive himself, fully determined to traverse his views, instead of seconding them.

Since we now understand one another, resumed the Prince, I expect, Father, that you satisfy me in one point. Who is the youth that I found in the vault? He must have been privy to *Isabella*'s flight: Tell me truly; is he her lover? or is he an agent for another's passion? I have often suspected *Isabella*'s indifference to my son: a thousand circumstances croud on my mind that confirm that suspicion. She herself was so conscious of it, that while I discoursed her in the gallery, she

outran

certain my ſuſpicions, and endeavoured to juſtify herſelf from coolneſs to *Conrad*. The Friar, who knew nothing of the youth, but what he had learnt occaſionally from the Princeſs, ignorant what was become of him, and not ſufficiently reflecting on the impetuoſity of *Manfred*'s temper, conceived that it might not be amiſs to ſow the ſeeds of jealouſy in his mind: they might be turned to ſome uſe hereafter, either by prejudicing the Prince againſt *Iſabella*, if he perſiſted in that union; or by diverting his attention to a wrong ſcent, and employing his thoughts on a viſionary intrigue, prevent his engaging in any new purſuit. With this unhappy policy, he anſwered in a manner to confirm *Manfred* in the belief of ſome connection between *Iſabella* and the youth. The Prince, whoſe paſſions wanted little fuel to throw them into a blaze, fell into a rage at the idea of what the Friar ſuggeſted. I will fathom to the bottom of this intrigue; cried he; and quitting *Jerome* abruptly, with a command

to

to remain there till his return, he haſtened to the great hall of the caſtle, and ordered the peaſant to be brought before him.

Thou hardened young impoſtor! ſaid the Prince, as ſoon as he ſaw the youth; what becomes of thy boaſted veracity now? it was Providence, was it, and the light of the moon, that diſcovered the lock of the trap-door to thee? Tell me, audacious boy, who thou art, and how long thou haſt been acquainted with the Princeſs——and take care to anſwer with leſs equivocation than thou didſt laſt night, or tortures ſhall wring the truth from thee. The young man, perceiving that his ſhare in the flight of the Princeſs was diſcovered, and concluding that any thing he ſhould ſay could no longer be of ſervice or detriment to her, replied, I am no impoſtor, my Lord, nor have I deſerved opprobrious language. I anſwered to every queſtion your Highneſs put to me laſt night with the ſame veracity that I ſhall ſpeak now: And that will not be from fear of your

tortures,

tortures, but becauſe my ſoul abhors a falſhood. Pleaſe to repeat your queſtions, my Lord; I am ready to give you all the ſatisfaction in my power. You know my queſtions, replied the Prince, and only want time to prepare an evaſion. Speak directly; who art thou? and how long haſt thou been known to the Princeſs? I am a labourer at the next village; ſaid the peaſant; my name is *Theodore*. The Princeſs found me in the vault laſt night: Before that hour I never was in her preſence. I may believe as much or as little as I pleaſe of this: Said *Manfred*; but I will hear thy own ſtory, before I examine into the truth of it. Tell me, what reaſon did the Princeſs give thee for making her eſcape? thy life depends on thy anſwer. She told me, replied *Theodore*, that ſhe was on the brink of deſtruction, and that if ſhe could not eſcape from the caſtle, ſhe was in danger in a few moments of being made miſerable for ever. And on this ſlight foundation, on a ſilly girl's report, ſaid *Manfred*, thou didſt hazard my diſpleaſure!

I fear

I fear no man's diſpleaſure, ſaid *Theodore*, when a woman in diſtreſs puts herſelf under my protection—During this examination, *Matilda* was going to the apartment of *Hippolita*. At the upper end of the hall, where *Manfred* ſat, was a boarded gallery with latticed windows, thro' which *Matilda* and *Bianca* were to paſs. Hearing her father's voice, and ſeeing the ſervants aſſembled round him, ſhe ſtopped to learn the occaſion. The priſoner ſoon drew her attention: The ſteady and compoſed manner in which he anſwered, and the gallantry of his laſt reply, which were the firſt words ſhe heard diſtinctly intereſted her in his favour. His perſon was noble, handſome, and commanding, even in that ſituation: But his countenance ſoon engroſſed her whole care. Heavens! *Bianca*, ſaid the Princeſs ſoftly, do I dream? or is not that youth the exact reſemblance of *Alfonſo*'s picture in the gallery? She could ſay no more, for her father's voice grew louder at every word. This bravado, ſaid he, ſurpaſſes all thy former

insolence. Thou shalt experience the wrath with which thou dareſt to trifle. Seize him, continued *Manfred*, and bind him—the firſt news the Princeſs hears of her champion shall be, that he has loſt his head for her ſake. The injuſtice of which thou art guilty towards me, ſaid *Theodore*, convinces me that I have done a good deed in delivering the Princeſs from thy tyranny. May ſhe be happy, whatever becomes of me! This is a Lover! cried *Manfred* in a rage: A peaſant within ſight of death is not animated by ſuch ſentiments. Tell me, tell me, raſh boy, who thou art, or the rack ſhall force thy ſecret from thee. Thou haſt threatened me with death already, ſaid the youth, for the truth I have told thee; If that is all the encouragement I am to expect for ſincerity, I am not tempted to indulge thy vain curioſity farther. Then thou wilt not ſpeak! ſaid *Manfred*; I will not; replied he. Bear him away into the court-yard; ſaid *Manfred*; I will ſee his head this inſtant ſe-

vered from his body —*Matilda* fainted at hearing thoſe words. *Bianca* ſhrieked, and cried, Help! help! the Princeſs is dead! *Manfred* ſtarted at this ejaculation, and demanded what was the matter! The young peaſant, who heard it too, was ſtruck with horror, and aſked eagerly the ſame queſtion; but *Manfred* ordered him to be hurried into the court, and kept there for execution, till he had informed himſelf of the cauſe of *Bianca*'s ſhrieks. When he learned the meaning, he treated it as a womaniſh panic, and ordering *Matilda* to be carried to her apartment, he ruſhed into the court, and calling for one of his guards, bad *Theodore* kneel down, and prepare to receive the fatal blow.

The undaunted youth received the bitter ſentence with a reſignation that touched every heart, but *Manfred*'s. He wiſhed earneſtly to know the meaning of the words he had heard relating to the Princeſs; but fearing to exaſperate the tyrant more againſt her, he deſiſted. The only boon he deigned to aſk, was, that he might

might be permitted to have a confeſſor, and make his peace with heaven. *Manfred*, who hoped by the confeſſor's means to come at the youth's hiſtory, readily granted his requeſt: and being convinced that Father *Jerome* was now in his intereſt, he ordered him to be called and ſhrieve the priſoner. The holy man, who had little foreſeen the cataſtrophe that his imprudence occaſioned, fell on his knees to the Prince, and adjured him in the moſt ſolemn manner not to ſhed innocent blood. He accuſed himſelf in the bittereſt terms for his indiſcretion, endeavoured to diſculpate the youth, and left no method untried to ſoften the tyrant's rage. *Manfred*, more incenſed than appeaſed by *Jerome*'s interceſſion, whoſe retractation now made him ſuſpect he had been impoſed upon by both, commanded the Friar to do his duty, telling him he would not allow the priſoner many minutes for confeſſion. Nor do I aſk many, my Lord: Said the unhappy young man. My ſins, thank heaven! have not been numerous; nor

exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us dispatch: This is a bad world; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret. Oh! wretched youth! said *Jerome*; how canst thou bear the sight of me with patience? I am thy murderer! it is I have brought this dismal hour upon thee! I forgive thee from my soul, said the youth, as I hope heaven will pardon me. Hear my confession, father; and give me thy blessing. How can I prepare thee for thy passage, as I ought? said *Jerome*. Thou canst not be saved without pardoning thy foes — and canst thou forgive that impious man there! I can; said *Theodore*; I do — And does not this touch thee! cruel Prince! said the Friar. I sent for thee to confess him, said *Manfred* sternly; not to plead for him. Thou didst first incense me against him — his blood be upon thy head! It will! it will said the good man, in an agony of sorrow. Thou and I must never hope to go, where this blessed youth is going! Dispatch! said *Manfred:*

fred: I am no more to be moved by the whining of prieſts, than by the ſhrieks of women. What! ſaid the youth; is it poſſible that my fate could have occaſioned what I heard! is the Princeſs then again in thy power? Thou doſt but remember me of my wrath; ſaid *Manfred:* Prepare thee, for this moment is thy laſt. The youth, who felt his indignation riſe, and who was touched with the ſorrow which he ſaw he had infuſed into all the ſpectators, as well as into the Friar, ſuppreſſed his emotions, and putting off his doublet, and unbuttoning his collar, knelt down to his prayers. As he ſtooped, his ſhirt ſlipped down below his ſhoulder, and diſcovered the mark of a bloody arrow. Gracious heaven! cried the holy man ſtarting, what do I ſee! it is my child! my *Theodore!*

The paſſions that enſued, muſt be conceived; they cannot be painted. The tears of the aſſiſtants were ſuſpended by wonder, rather than ſtopped by joy. They ſeemed to inquire in the eyes of their Lord what they ought to feel.

Surpriſe, doubt, tenderneſs, reſpect, ſucceeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received with modeſt ſubmiſſion the effuſion of the old man's tears and embraces: Yet afraid of giving a looſe to hope, and ſuſpecting from what had paſſed the inflexibility of *Manfred*'s temper, he caſt a glance towards the Prince, as if to ſay, canſt thou be unmoved at ſuch a ſcene as this?

Manfred's heart was capable of being touched. He forgot his anger in his aſtoniſhment; Yet his pride forbad his owning himſelf affected. He even doubted whether this diſcovery was not a contrivance of the friar to ſave the youth. What may this mean? ſaid he: How can he be thy ſon? is it conſiſtent with thy profeſſion or reputed ſanctity to avow a peaſant's offspring for the fruit of thy irregular amours! Oh! God, ſaid the holy man, doſt thou queſtion his being mine? could I feel the anguiſh I do, if I were not his father? Spare him! good Prince, ſpare him! and revile me as thou pleaſeſt. Spare him!

him! ſpare him, cried the attendants, for this good man's ſake! Peace! ſaid *Manfred* ſternly: I muſt know more, ere I am diſpoſed to pardon. A Saint's baſtard may be no ſaint himſelf. Injurious Lord! ſaid *Theodore*? add not inſult to cruelty. If I am this venerable man's ſon, tho' no Prince, as thou art, know, the blood that flows in my veins—yes, ſaid the Friar, interrupting him, his blood is noble; nor is he that abject thing, my Lord, you ſpeak him. He is my lawful ſon; and *Sicily* can boaſt of few houſes more ancient than that of *Falconara*—— but alas! my Lord, what is blood! what is nobility! We are all reptiles, miſerable, ſinful creatures. It is piety alone that can diſtinguiſh us from the duſt whence we ſprung, and whither we muſt return—Truce to your ſermon; ſaid *Manfred:* You forget, you are no longer Friar *Jerome*, but the Count of *Falconara*. Let me know your hiſtory: you will have time to moralize hereafter, if you ſhould not happen to obtain the grace of that ſturdy criminal there.

Mother of God! ſaid the Friar, is it poſſible my Lord can refuſe a father the life of his only, his long-loſt child! Trample me, my Lord, ſcorn, afflict me, accept my life for his, but ſpare my ſon! Thou canſt feel then, ſaid *Manfred*, what it is to loſe an only ſon!——a little hour ago thou didſt preach up reſignation to me: *My* Houſe, if fate ſo pleaſed, muſt periſh —but the Count of *Falconara*—alas! my Lord, ſaid *Jerome*, I confeſs I have offended; but aggravate not an old man's ſufferings! I boaſt not of my family, nor think of ſuch vanities—it is nature that pleads for this boy; it is the memory of the dear woman that bore him—is ſhe *Theodore*, is ſhe dead?—Her ſoul has long been with the bleſſed: Said *Theodore*. Oh! how? cried *Jerome*, tell me—No—ſhe is happy! Thou art all my care now!—moſt dread Lord! will you—— will you grant me my poor boy's life? Return to thy convent; anſwered *Manfred*; conduct the Princeſs hither; obey me in what elſe thou knoweſt; and I promiſe thee the life

of

of thy ſon.——Oh! my Lord, ſaid *Jerome*, is my honeſty the price I muſt pay for this dear youth's ſafety—for me! cried *Theodore:* Let me die a thouſand deaths, rather than ſtain thy conſcience. What is it the tyrant would exact of thee? is the Princeſs ſtill ſafe from his power? protect her, thou venerable old man; and let all the weight of his wrath fall on me. *Jerome* endeavoured to check the impetuoſity of the youth; and ere *Manfred* could reply, the trampling of horſes was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung without the gate of the caſtle, was ſuddenly ſounded. At the ſame inſtant the ſable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which ſtill remained at the other end of the court, were tempeſtuouſly agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by ſome inviſible wearer.

CHAP. III.

MANFRED's heart miſ-gave him when he beheld the plumage on the miraculous caſque ſhaken in concert with the ſounding of the brazen trumpet. Father! ſaid he to *Jerome*, whom he now ceaſed to treat as Count of *Falconara*, what mean theſe portents? If I have offendcd—the plumes were ſhaken with greater violence than before. Unhappy Prince that I am! cried *Manfred*—Holy Father! will you not aſſiſt me with your prayers? My Lord, replied *Jerome*, heaven is no doubt diſpleaſed with your mockery of its ſervants. Submit yourſelf to the church; and ceaſe to perſecute her miniſters. Diſmiſs this innocent youth; and learn to reſpect the holy character I wear: Heaven will not be trifled with: you ſee—— the trumpet ſounded again. I acknowledge I have been too haſty: ſaid *Manfred*. Father,

do

do you go to the wicket, and demand who is at the gate.. Do you grant me the life of *Theodore?* replied the Friar. I do; ſaid *Manfred*; but inquire who is without!

Jerome falling on the neck of his ſon, diſcharged a flood of tears, that ſpoke the fulneſs of his ſoul. You promiſed to go to the gate; ſaid *Manfred.* I thought, replied the Friar, your Highneſs would excuſe my thanking you firſt in this tribute of my heart. Go, deareſt Sir, ſaid *Theodore*; obey the Prince: I do not deſerve that you ſhould delay his ſatisfaction for me.

Jerome, inquiring who was without, was anſwered a Herald. From whom? ſaid he. From the Knight of the Gigantic ſabre; ſaid the Herald; and I muſt ſpeak with the uſurper of *Otranto.* *Jerome* returned to the Prince, and did not fail to repeat the meſſage in the very words it had been uttered. The firſt ſounds ſtruck *Manfred* with terror; but when he heard himſelf ſtiled uſurper, his rage rekindled, and all his courage revived. Uſurper!—inſolent villain! cried he, who dares to queſtion my title? retire,

Father;

Father; this is no buſineſs for Monks: I will meet this preſumptuous man myſelf. Go to your convent and prepare the Princeſs's return: Your Son ſhall be a hoſtage for your fidelity: His life depends on your obedience. Good heaven! my Lord, cried *Jerome*, your Highneſs did but this inſtant freely pardon my child—have you ſo ſoon forgot the interpoſition of heaven? Heaven, replied *Manfred*, does not ſend Heralds to queſtion the title of a lawful Prince——I doubt whether it even notifies its will through Friars—but that is your affair, not mine. At preſent you know my pleaſure; and it is not a ſaucy Herald, that ſhall ſave your ſon, if you do not return with the Princeſs.

It was in vain for the holy man to reply. *Manfred* commanded him to be conducted to the poſtern-gate, and ſhut out from the caſtle: And he ordered ſome of his attendants to carry *Theodore* to the top of the black tower, and guard him ſtrictly; ſcarce permitting the Father and ſon to exchange a haſty embrace at parting.

He then withdrew to the hall, and ſeating himſelf in princely ſtate, ordered the Herald to be admitted to his preſence.

Well! thou inſolent! ſaid the Prince, what wouldſt thou with me! I come, replied he, to thee, *Manfred*, uſurper of the principality of *Otranto*, from the renowned and invincible Knight, the Knight of the Gigantic ſabre: in the name of his Lord, *Frederic* Marquis of *Vicenza*, he demands the Lady *Iſabella*, daughter of that Prince, whom thou haſt baſely and traiterouſly got into thy power, by bribing her falſe guardians during his abſence: and he requires thee to reſign the principality of *Otranto*, which thou haſt uſurped from the ſaid Lord *Frederic*, the neareſt of blood to the laſt rightful Lord *Alfonſo* the good. If thou doſt not inſtantly comply with theſe juſt demands, he defies thee to ſingle combat to the laſt extremity. And ſo ſaying, the Herald caſt down his warder.

And where is this braggart, who ſends thee? ſaid *Manfred*. At the diſtance of a league, ſaid the

the Herald: he comes to make good his Lord's claim againſt thee, as he is a true Knight and thou an uſurper and raviſher.

Injurious as this challenge was, *Manfred* reflected that it was not his intereſt to provoke the Marquis. He knew how well-founded the claim of *Frederic* was; nor was this the firſt time he had heard of it. *Frederic*'s anceſtors had aſſumed the ſtile of Princes of *Otranto*, from the death of *Alfonſo* the good without iſſue; but *Manfred*, his father, and grandfather, had been too powerful for the houſe of *Vicenza* to diſpoſſeſs them. *Frederic*, a martial and amorous young Prince, had married a beautiful young Lady, of whom he was enamoured, and who had died in childbed of *Iſabella*. Her death affected him ſo much, that he had taken the croſs and gone to the holy land, where he was wounded in an engagement againſt the infidels, made priſoner, and reported to be dead. When the news reached *Manfred*'s ears, he bribed the guardians of the Lady *Iſabella* to deliver her up

to

to him as a bride for his ſon *Conrad*, by which alliance he had propoſed to unite the claims of the two houſes. This motive, on *Conrad*'s death, had co-operated to make him ſo ſuddenly reſolve on eſpouſing her himſelf; and the ſame reflection determined him now to endeavour at obtaining the conſent of *Frederic* to this marriage. A like policy inſpired him with the thought of inviting *Frederic*'s champion into his caſtle, leſt he ſhould be informed of *Iſabella*'s flight, which he ſtrictly enjoined his domeſtics not to diſcloſe to any of the Knight's retinue.

Herald, ſaid *Manfred*, as ſoon as he had digeſted theſe reflections, return to thy maſter, and tell him, e'er we liquidate our differences by the ſword, *Manfred* would hold ſome converſe with him. Bid him welcome to my caſtle, where by my faith, as I am a true Knight, he ſhall have courteous reception, and full ſecurity for himſelf and followers. If we cannot adjuſt our quarrel by amicable means, I ſwear he ſhall depart in ſafety, and ſhall have full ſatisfaction

according

according to the laws of arms: So help me God and his holy Trinity! the Herald made three obeiſances and retired.

During this interview *Jerome*'s mind was agitated by a thouſand contrary paſſions. He trembled for the life of his ſon, and his firſt thought was to perſuade *Iſabella* to return to the caſtle. Yet he was ſcarce leſs alarmed at the thought of her union with *Manfred*. He dreaded *Hippolita*'s unbounded ſubmiſſion to the will of her Lord; and though he did not doubt but he could alarm her piety not to conſent to a divorce, if he could get acceſs to her; yet ſhould *Manfred* diſcover that the obſtruction came from him, it might be equally fatal to *Theodore*. He was impatient to know whence came the Herald, who with ſo little management had queſtioned the title of *Manfred:* yet he did not dare abſent himſelf from the convent, leſt *Iſabella* ſhould leave it, and her flight be imputed to him. He returned diſconſolately to the monaſtery, uncertain on what conduct to reſolve. A Monk, who met

him

him in the porch and obſerved his melancholy air, ſaid, alas! brother, is it then true that we have loſt our excellent Princeſs *Hippolita?* The holy man ſtarted, and cried, what meaneſt thou, brother! I come this inſtant from the caſtle, and left her in perfect health. *Martelli*, replied the other Friar, paſſed by the convent but a quarter of an hour ago on his way from the caſtle, and reported that her Highneſs was dead. All our brethren are gone to the chapel to pray for her happy tranſit to a better life, and willed me to wait thy arrival. They know thy holy attachment to that good Lady, and are anxious for the affliction it will cauſe in thee—indeed we have all reaſon to weep; ſhe was a mother to our houſe—but this life is but a pilgrimage; we muſt not murmur—we ſhall all follow her! may our end be like her's! good brother, thou dreameſt, ſaid *Jerome:* I tell thee I come from the caſtle, and left the Princeſs well—where is the Lady *Iſabella?*—poor Gentlewoman! replied the Friar; I told her the ſad news, and offered

offered her ſpiritual comfort; I reminded her of the tranſitory condition of mortality, and adviſed her to take the veil: I quoted the example of the holy Princeſs *Sanchia* of *Arragon* — thy zeal was laudable, ſaid *Jerome* impatiently; but at preſent it was unneceſſary: *Hippolita* is well — at leaſt I truſt in the Lord ſhe is; I heard nothing to the contrary — yet methinks, the Prince's earneſtneſs—well, brother, but where is the Lady *Iſabella?* I know not; ſaid the Friar: She wept much, and ſaid ſhe would retire to her chamber. *Jerome* left his comrade abruptly, and haſted to the Princeſs, but ſhe was not in her chamber. He inquired of the domeſtics of the convent, but could learn no news of her. He ſearched in vain throughout the monaſtery and the church, and diſpatched meſſengers round the neighbourhood, to get intelligence if ſhe had been ſeen; but to no purpoſe. Nothing could equal the good man's perplexity. He judged that *Iſabella*, ſuſpecting *Manfred* of having precipitated his wife's death,

had

had taken the alarm, and withdrawn herſelf to ſome more ſecret place of concealment. This new flight would probably carry the Prince's fury to the height. The report of *Hippolita's* death, though it ſeemed almoſt incredible, increaſed his conſternation; and though *Iſabella's* eſcape beſpoke her averſion of *Manfred* for a huſband, *Jerome* could feel no comfort from it, while it endangered the life of his ſon. He determined to return to the caſtle, and made ſeveral of his brethren accompany him to atteſt his innocence to *Manfred*, and, if neceſſary, join their interceſſion with his for *Theodore*.

The Prince, in the mean time, had paſſed into the court, and ordered the gates of the caſtle to be flung open for the reception of the ſtranger Knight and his train. In a few minutes the cavalcade arrived. Firſt came two harbingers with wands. Next a herald, followed by two pages and two trumpets. Then an hundred foot-guards. Theſe were attended by as many horſe. After them fifty footmen, cloathed in

ſcarlet and black, the colours of the Knight. Then a led horſe. Two heralds on each ſide of a gentleman on horſeback bearing a banner with the arms of *Vicenza* and *Otranto* quarterly ——a circumſtance that much offended *Manfred*——but he ſtifled his reſentment. Two more pages. The Knight's confeſſor telling his beads. Fifty more footmen, clad as before. Two Knight's habited in complete armour, their beavers down, comrades to the principal Knight. The ſquires of the two Knights, carrying their ſhields and devices. The Knight's own ſquire. An hundred gentlemen bearing an enormous ſword, and ſeeming to faint under the weight of it. The Knight himſelf on a cheſtnut ſteed, in complete armour, his lance in the reſt, his face entirely concealed by his vizor, which was ſurmounted by a large plume of ſcarlet and black feathers. Fifty foot-guards with drums and trumpets cloſed the proceſſion, which wheeled off to the right and left to make room for the principal Knight.

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As ſoon as he approached the gate, he ſtopped; and the herald advancing, read again the words of the challenge. *Manfred*'s eyes were fixed on the gigantic ſword; and he ſcarce ſeemed to attend to the cartel: But his attention was ſoon diverted by a tempeſt of wind that roſe behind him. He turned and beheld the plumes of the enchanted helmet agitated in the ſame extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like *Manfred*'s not to ſink under a concurrence of circumſtances that ſeemed to announce his fate. Yet ſcorning in the preſence of ſtrangers to betray the courage he had always manifeſted, he ſaid boldly, Sir Knight, whoever thou art, I bid thee welcome. If thou art of mortal mould, thy valour ſhall meet its equal; And if thou art a true Knight, thou wilt ſcorn to employ ſorcery to carry thy point. Be theſe omens from heaven or hell, *Manfred* truſts to the righteouſneſs of his cauſe and to the aid of St. *Nicholas*, who has ever protected his houſe. Alight, Sir Knight, and repoſe thyſelf. To-

morrow thou ſhalt have a fair field; and heaven befriend the juſter ſide!

The Knight made no reply, but diſmounting, was conducted by *Manfred* to the great hall of the caſtle. As they traverſed the court, the Knight ſtopped to gaze at the miraculous caſque; and kneeling down, ſeemed to pray inwardly for ſome minutes. Riſing, he made a ſign to the Prince to lead on. As ſoon as they entered the hall, *Manfred* propoſed to the ſtranger to diſarm, but the Knight ſhook his head in token of refuſal. Sir Knight, ſaid *Manfred*, this is not courteous; but by my good faith I will not croſs thee; nor ſhalt thou have cauſe to complain of the Prince of *Otranto*. No treachery is deſigned on my part; I hope none is intended on thine; Here take my gage: [giving him his ring] your friends and you ſhall enjoy the laws of hoſpitality. Reſt here, until refreſhments are brought: I will but give orders for the accommodation of your train, and return to you. The three Knights bowed as accepting his courteſy.

teſy. *Manfred* directed the ſtranger's retinue to be conducted to an adjacent hoſpital, founded by the Princeſs *Hippolita* for the reception of pilgrims. As they made the circuit of the court to return towards the gate, the gigantic ſword burſt from the ſupporters, and falling to the ground oppoſite to the helmet, remained immoveable. *Manfred* almoſt hardened to preternatural appearances, ſurmounted the ſhock of this new prodigy; and returning to the hall, where by this time the feaſt was ready, he invited his ſilent gueſts to take their Places. *Manfred*, however ill his heart was at eaſe, endeavoured to inſpire the company with mirth. He put ſeveral queſtions to them, but was anſwered only by ſigns. They raiſed their vizors but ſufficiently to feed themſelves, and that ſparingly. Sirs, ſaid the Prince, ye are the firſt gueſts I ever treated within theſe walls, who ſcorned to hold any intercourſe with me: Nor has it oft been cuſtomary, I ween, for Princes to hazard their ſtate and dignity againſt ſtrangers

and mutes. You ſay you come in the name of *Frederic* of *Vicenza*; I have ever heard that he was a gallant and courteous Knight; nor would he, I am bold to ſay, think it beneath him to mix in ſocial converſe with a Prince that is his equal, and not unknown by deeds in arms.—— Still ye are ſilent—well! be it as it may—— by the laws of hoſpitality and chivalry ye are maſters under this roof: Ye ſhall do your pleaſures—but come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuſe to pledge me to the healths of your fair miſtreſſes. The principal Knight ſighed and croſſed himſelf, and was riſing from the board.—Sir Knight, ſaid *Manfred*, what I ſaid was but in ſport: I ſhall conſtrain you in nothing: Uſe your good liking. Since mirth is not your mood, let us be ſad. Buſineſs may hit your fancies better: Let us withdraw; and hear if what I have to unfold, may be better reliſhed than the vain efforts I have made for your paſtime.

Manfred

Manfred then conducting the three Knights into an inner chamber, ſhut the door, and inviting them to be ſeated, began thus, addreſſing himſelf to the chief perſonage.

You come, Sir Knight, as I underſtand, in the name of the Marquis of *Vicenza*, to re-demand the Lady *Iſabella* his daughter, who has been contracted in the face of holy church to my ſon, by the conſent of her legal guardians; and to require me to reſign my dominions to your Lord, who gives himſelf for the neareſt of blood to Prince *Alfonſo*, whoſe ſoul God reſt! I ſhall ſpeak to the latter article of your demands firſt. You muſt know, your Lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of *Otranto* from my father *Don Manuel*, as he received it from his father *Don Ricardo*. *Alfonſo*, their predeceſſor, dying childleſs in the Holy Land, bequeathed his eſtates to my grandfather *Don Ricardo*, in conſideration of his faithful ſervices——the ſtranger ſhook his head—Sir Knight, ſaid *Manfred* warmly, *Ricardo* was a valiant and upright

man; he was a pious man, witneſs his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronized by St. *Nicholas*—my grandfather was incapable ——I ſay, Sir, *Don Ricardo* was incapable—excuſe me, your interruption has diſordered me. —I venerate the memory of my grandfather—well! Sirs, he held this eſtate; he held it by his good ſword and by the favour of St. *Nicholas* —ſo did my father; and ſo, Sirs, will I, come what come will——but *Frederic*, your Lord, is neareſt in blood—I have conſented to put my title to the iſſue of the ſword—does that imply a vitious title?—I might have aſked, where is *Frederic* your Lord? Report ſpeaks him dead in captivity. You ſay, your actions ſay, he lives —I queſtion it not—I might, Sirs, I might—but I do not. Other Princes would bid *Frederic* take his inheritance by force, if he can: They would not ſtake their dignity on a ſingle combat: They would not ſubmit it to the deciſion of unknown mutes!—pardon me, Gentlemen,

I am

I am too warm: But ſuppoſe yourſelves in my ſituation: As ye are ſtout Knights, would it not move your choler to have your own and the honour of your anceſtors called in queſtion?—but to the point. Ye require me to deliver up the Lady *Iſabella*——Sirs, I muſt aſk if ye are authorized to receive her? The Knight nodded. Receive her— continued *Manfred*; well! you are authorized to receive her——but, gentle Knight, may I aſk if you have full powers? The Knight nodded. 'Tis well: Said *Manfred:* Then hear what I have to offer—ye ſee, Gentlemen, before you the moſt unhappy of men! [he began to weep] afford me your compaſſion; I am intitled to it: Indeed I am. Know, I have loſt my only hope, my joy, the ſupport of my houſe——*Conrad* died yeſter morning. The Knights diſcovered ſigns of ſurpriſe. Yes, Sirs, fate has diſpoſed of my ſon. *Iſabella* is at liberty—Do you then reſtore her? cried the chief Knight, breaking ſilence. Afford me your patience: Said *Manfred*. I rejoice

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to find, by this teſtimony of your good-will, that this matter may be adjuſted without blood. It is no intereſt of mine dictates what little I have farther to ſay. Ye behold in me a man diſguſted with the world: The loſs of my ſon has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatneſs have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wiſhed to tranſmit the ſceptre I had received from my anceſtors with honour to my ſon — but that is over! Life itſelf is ſo indifferent to me, that I accepted your defiance with joy: A good Knight cannot go to the grave with more ſatisfaction than when falling in his vocation. Whatever is the will of heaven, I ſubmit; for alas! Sirs, I am a man of many ſorrows. *Manfred* is no object of envy——but no doubt you are acquainted with my ſtory. The Knight made ſigns of ignorance, and ſeemed curious to have *Manfred* proceed. Is it poſſible, Sirs, continued the Prince, that my ſtory ſhould be a ſecret to you? have you heard nothing relating to me and the Princeſs *Hippolita?*

him? They ſhook their heads—no! thus then, Sirs, it is. You think me ambitious: Ambition alas! is compoſed of more rugged materials. If I were ambitious, I ſhould not for ſo many years have been a prey to all the hell of conſcientious ſcruples—but I weary your patience: I will be brief. Know then, that I have long been troubled in mind on my union with the Princeſs *Hippolita*.—Oh! Sirs, if ye were acquainted with that excellent woman! if ye knew that I adore her like a miſtreſs, and cheriſh her as a friend—but man was not born for perfect happineſs! ſhe ſhares my ſcruples, and with her conſent I have brought this matter before the church, for we are related within the forbidden degrees. I expect every hour the definitive ſentence that muſt ſeparate us for ever—I am ſure you feel for me—I ſee you do—pardon theſe tears! The Knights gazed on each other, wondering where this would end. *Manfred* continued. The death of my ſon betiding while my ſoul was under this anxiety, I thought

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of nothing but reſigning my dominions, and retiring for ever from the ſight of mankind. My only difficulty was to fix on a ſucceſſor, who would be tender of my people, and to diſpoſe of the Lady *Iſabella*, who is dear to me as my own blood. I was willing to reſtore the line of *Alfonſo*, even in his moſt diſtant kindred: And though, pardon me, I am ſatisfied it was his will that *Ricardo*'s lineage ſhould take place of his own relations; yet where was I to ſearch for thoſe relations? I knew of none but *Frederic* your Lord; he was a captive to the infidels, or dead; and were he living, and at home, would he quit the flouriſhing ſtate of *Vicenza* for the inconſiderable principality of *Otranto?* If he would not, could I bear the thought of ſeeing a hard unfeeling Viceroy ſet over my poor faithful people?—for, Sirs, I love my people, and thank heaven am beloved by them——but ye will aſk, whither tends this long diſcourſe? briefly then, thus, Sirs. Heaven in your arrival ſeems to point out a remedy for theſe difficulties and my misfortunes. The Lady *Iſabella* is at liberty; I ſhall ſoon

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be ſo—I would ſubmit to any thing for the good of my people——were it not the beſt, the only way to extinguiſh the feuds between our families, if I was to take the Lady *Iſabella* to wife —you ſtart—but though *Hippolita*'s virtues will ever be dear to me, a Prince muſt not conſider himſelf; he is born for his people.—A ſervant at that inſtant entering the chamber apprized *Manfred* that *Jerome* and ſeveral of his brethren demanded immediate acceſs to him.

The Prince, provoked at this interruption, and fearing that the Friar would diſcover to the ſtrangers that *Iſabella* had taken ſanctuary, was going to forbid *Jerome*'s entrance. But recollecting that he was certainly arrived to notify the Princeſs's return, *Manfred* began to excuſe himſelf to the Knights for leaving them for a few moments, but was prevented by the arrival of the Friars. *Manfred* angrily reprimanded them for their intruſion, and would have forced them back from the chamber; but *Jerome* was too much agitated to be repulſed. He declared aloud

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the flight of *Iſabella*, with proteſtations of his own innocence. *Manfred* diſtracted at the news, and not leſs at its coming to the knowledge of the ſtrangers, uttered nothing but incoherent ſentences, now upbraiding the Friar, now apologizing to the Knights, earneſt to know what was become of *Iſabella*, yet equally afraid of their knowing, impatient to purſue her, yet dreading to have them join in the purſuit. He offered to diſpatch meſſengers in queſt of her,——but the chief Knight no longer keeping ſilence, reproached *Manfred* in bitter terms for his dark and ambiguous dealing, and demanded the cauſe of *Iſabella*'s firſt abſence from the caſtle. *Manfred*, caſting a ſtern look at *Jerome*, implying a command of ſilence, pretended that on *Conrad*'s death he had placed her in ſanctuary until he could determine how to diſpoſe of her. *Jerome*, who trembled for his ſon's life, did not dare contradict this falſhood, but one of his brethren, not under the ſame anxiety, declared frankly that ſhe had fled to their church in the preceding

night. The Prince in vain endeavoured to ſtop this diſcovery, which overwhelmed him with ſhame and confuſion. The principal ſtranger, amazed at the contradictions he heard, and more than half perſuaded that *Manfred* had ſecreted the Princeſs, notwithſtanding the concern he expreſſed at her flight, ruſhing to the door, ſaid, thou traitor-Prince! *Iſabella* ſhall be found. *Manfred* endeavoured to hold him, but the other Knights aſſiſting their comrade, he broke from the Prince, and haſtened into the court, demanding his attendants. *Manfred* finding it vain to divert him from the purſuit, offered to accompany him; and ſummoning his attendants, and taking *Jerome* and ſome of the Friars to guide them, they iſſued from the caſtle; *Manfred* privately giving orders, to have the Knight's company ſecured, while to the Knight he affected to diſpatch a meſſenger to require their aſſiſtance.

The company had no ſooner quitted the caſtle, than *Matilda*, who felt herſelf deeply intereſted

tereſted for the young peaſant, ſince ſhe had ſeen him condemned to death in the hall, and whoſe thoughts had been taken up with concerting meaſures to ſave him, was informed by ſome of the female attendants that *Manfred* had diſpatched all his men various ways in purſuit of *Iſabella*. He had in his hurry given this order in general terms, not meaning to extend it to the guard he had ſet upon *Theodore*, but forgetting it. The domeſtics, officious to obey ſo peremptory a Prince, and urged by their own curioſity and love of novelty to join in any precipitate chace, had to a man left the caſtle. *Matilda* diſengaged herſelf from her women, ſtole up to the black tower, and unbolting the door, preſented herſelf to the aſtoniſhed *Theodore*. Young man, ſaid ſhe, though filial duty, and womanly modeſty condemn the ſtep I am taking, yet holy charity, ſurmounting all other ties, juſtifies this act. Fly; the doors of thy priſon are open: My father and his domeſtics are abſent; but they may ſoon return: Be gone

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in ſafety; and may the angels of heaven direct thy courſe! Thou art ſurely one of thoſe angels! ſaid the enraptured *Theodore*: None but a bleſſed ſaint could ſpeak, could act——could look like thee!—may I not know the name of my divine protectreſs! methought thou namedſt thy father: Is it poſſible! can *Manfred*'s blood feel holy pity!—lovely Lady, thou anſwereſt not——but how art thou here thyſelf? why doſt thou neglect thy own ſafety, and waſte a thought on a wretch like *Theodore?* let us fly together: The life thou beſtoweſt ſhall be dedicated to thy defence. Alas! thou miſtakeſt; ſaid *Matilda* ſighing: I am *Manfred*'s daughter, but no dangers await me. Amazement! ſaid *Theodore:* But laſt night I bleſſed myſelf for yielding thee the ſervice thy gracious compaſſion ſo charitably returns me now. Still thou art in an error; ſaid the Princeſs; but this is no time for explanation. Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to ſave thee: Should my father return, thou and I both ſhould indeed have

cauſe to tremble. How! ſaid *Theodore*; think-eſt thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endured a thouſand deaths, —I run no riſk, ſaid *Matilda*, but by thy delay. Depart; it cannot be known that I aſſiſted thy flight. Swear by the ſaints above, ſaid *Theodore*, that thou canſt not be ſuſpected; elſe here I vow to await whatever can befal me. Oh! thou art too generous; ſaid *Matilda*; but reſt aſſured that no ſuſpicion can alight on me. Give me thy beauteous hand in token that thou doſt not deceive me, ſaid *Theodore*; and let me bathe it with the warm tears of gratitude,—— forbear; ſaid the Princeſs; this muſt not be. Alas! ſaid *Theodore*, I have never known but calamity until this hour—perhaps ſhall never know other fortune again: Suffer the chaſte raptures of holy gratitude: 'Tis my ſoul would print its effuſions on thy hand. Forbear, and be gone: Said *Matilda*:—How would *Iſabella* approve of ſeeing thee at my feet? Who is *Iſabella?*

bella? ſaid the young man with ſurprize. Ah me! I fear, ſaid the Princeſs, I am ſerving a deceitful one!—haſt thou forgot thy curioſity this morning? Thy looks, thy actions, all thy beauteous ſelf ſeems an emanation of divinity, ſaid *Theodore*, but thy words are dark and myſterious, —— ſpeak, Lady; ſpeak to thy ſervant's comprehenſion.—Thou underſtandeſt but to well! ſaid *Matilda:* But once more I command thee to be gone: Thy blood, which I may preſerve, will be on my head, if I waſte the time in vain diſcourſe. I go, Lady, ſaid *Theodore*, becauſe it is thy will, and becauſe I would not bring the grey hairs of my father with ſorrow to the grave. Say but, adored Lady, that I have thy gentle pity.—Stay; ſaid *Matilda*; I will conduct thee to the ſubterraneous vault by which *Iſabella* eſcaped; it will lead thee to the church of St. *Nicholas*, where thou mayſt take ſanctuary. ——What! ſaid *Theodore*, was it another, and not thy lovely ſelf that I aſſiſted to find the ſubterraneous paſſage? It was;

ſaid *Matilda*; but aſk no more: I tremble to ſee thee ſtill abide here: Fly to the ſanctuary,—to ſanctuary ſaid *Theodore:* No, Princeſs; ſanctuaries are for helpleſs damſels, or for criminals. *Theodore*'s ſoul is free from guilt, nor will wear the appearance of it. Give me a ſword, Lady, and thy father ſhall learn that *Theodore* ſcorns an ignominious flight. Raſh youth! ſaid *Matilda*, thou wouldſt not dare to liſt thy preſumptuous arm againſt the Prince of *Otranto?* Not againſt thy father; indeed I dare not: ſaid *Theodore*: Excuſe me, Lady; I had forgotten,——but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art ſprung from the tyrant *Manfred?*——but he is thy father, and from this moment my injuries are buried in oblivion. A deep and hollow groan, which ſeemed to come from above, ſtartled the Princeſs and *Theodore*. Good heaven! we are overheard! ſaid the Princeſs. They liſtened; but perceiving no farther noiſe, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours: And the Prin-

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ceſs preceding *Theodore* ſoftly, carried him to her father's armory, where equipping him with a complete ſuit, he was conducted by *Matilda* to the poſtern-gate. Avoid the town, ſaid the Princeſs, and all the weſtern ſide of the caſtle: 'Tis there the ſearch muſt be making by *Manfred* and the ſtrangers: But hie thee to the oppoſite quarter. Yonder behind that foreſt to the eaſt is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach to the ſea-coaſt. There thou mayſt lie concealed, till thou canſt make ſigns to ſome veſſel to put on ſhore and take thee off. Go! heaven be thy guide! —and ſometimes in thy prayers remember— *Matilda!* *Theodore* flung himſelf at her feet, and ſeizing her lilly hand, which with ſtruggles ſhe ſuffered him to kiſs, he vowed on the earlieſt opportunity to get himſelf knighted, and fervently intreated her permiſſion to ſwear himſelf eternally her knight——E'er the Princeſs could reply, a clap of thunder was ſuddenly heard, that ſhook the battlements. *Theodore*, regardleſs

that good men were abandoned without cauſe to the malice of the powers of darkneſs. He thought the place more likely to be infeſted by robbers than by thoſe infernal agents who are reported to moleſt and bewilder travellers. He had long burned with impatience to approve his valour——drawing his ſabre, he marched ſedately onwards, ſtill directing his ſteps, as the imperfect ruſtling ſound before him led the way. The armour he wore was a like indication to the perſon who avoided him. *Theodore* now convinced that he was not miſtaken, redoubled his pace, and evidently gained on the perſon that fled, whoſe haſte increaſing, *Theodore* came up juſt as a woman fell breathleſs before him. He haſted to raiſe her, but her terror was ſo great, that he apprehended ſhe would faint in his arms. He uſed every gentle word to diſpel her alarms, and aſſured her that far from injuring, he would defend her at the peril of his life. The Lady recovering her ſpirits from his courteous demeanour, and gazing on her protector,

tector, ſaid, ſure I have heard that voice before! not to my knowledge, replied *Theodore*, unleſs as I conjecture thou art the Lady *Iſabella*, ——merciful heaven! cried ſhe, thou art not ſent in queſt of me, art thou? and ſaying thoſe words, ſhe threw herſelf at his feet, and beſought him not to deliver her up to *Manfred*. To *Manfred!* cried *Theodore*—no, Lady, I have once already delivered thee from his tyranny, and it ſhall fare hard with me now, but I will place thee out of the reach of his daring. Is it poſſible, ſaid ſhe, that thou ſhouldſt be the generous unknown whom I met laſt night in the vault of the caſtle? ſure thou art not a mortal, but my guardian angel: On my knees let me thank—hold, gentle Princeſs, ſaid *Theodore*, nor demean thyſelf before a poor and friendleſs young man. If heaven has ſelected me for thy deliverer, it will accompliſh its work, and ſtrengthen my arm in thy cauſe——but come, Lady, we are too near the mouth of the cavern; let us ſeek its inmoſt receſſes: I

can have no tranquillity till I have placed thee beyond the reach of danger. Alas! what mean you, Sir? ſaid ſhe. Though all your actions are noble, though your ſentiments ſpeak the purity of your ſoul, is it fitting that I ſhould accompany you alone into theſe perplexed retreats? ſhould we be found together, what would a cenſorious world think of my conduct? I reſpect your virtuous delicacy, ſaid *Theodore*; nor do you harbour a ſuſpicion that wounds my honour. I meant to conduct you into the moſt private cavity of theſe rocks, and then at the hazard of my life to guard their entrance againſt every living thing. Beſides, Lady, continued he drawing a deep ſigh, beauteous and all perfect as your form is, and though my wiſhes are not guiltleſs of aſpiring, know, my ſoul is dedicated to another; and although——a ſudden noiſe prevented *Theodore* from proceeding. They ſoon diſtinguiſhed theſe ſounds, *Iſabella!* what ho! *Iſabella!*—— the trembling Princeſs relapſed into her former agony

agony of fear. *Theodore* endeavoured to encourage her, but in vain. He aſſured her he would die rather than ſuffer her to return under *Manfred*'s power; and begging her to remain concealed, he went forth to prevent the perſon in ſearch of her from approaching.

At the mouth of the cavern he found an armed Knight, diſcourſing with a peaſant, who aſſured him he had ſeen a lady enter the paſſes of the rock. The Knight was preparing to ſeek her, when *Theodore*, placing himſelf in his way, with his ſword drawn, ſternly forbad him at his peril to advance. And who art thou who dareſt to croſs my way? ſaid the Knight haughtily. One who does not dare more than he will perform, ſaid *Theodore*. I ſeek the Lady *Iſabella*; ſaid the Knight, and underſtand ſhe has taken refuge among theſe rocks. Impede me not, or thou wilt repent having provoked my reſentment. Thy purpoſe is as odious, as thy reſentment is contemptible, ſaid *Theodore*. Return whence thou

cameſt,

cameſt, or we ſhall ſoon know whoſe reſentment is moſt terrible. The ſtranger, who was the principal Knight that had arrived from the marquis of *Vicenza*, had galloped from *Manfred* as he was buſied in getting information of the Princeſs, and giving various orders to prevent her falling into the power of the three Knights. Their chief had ſuſpected *Manfred* of being privy to the Princeſs's abſconding; and this inſult from a man, who he concluded was ſtationed by that Prince to ſecrete her, confirming his ſuſpicions, he made no reply, but diſcharging a blow with his ſabre at *Theodore*, would ſoon have removed all obſtruction, if *Theodore*, who took him for one of *Manfred's* captains, and who had no ſooner given the provocation than prepared to ſupport it, had not received the ſtroke on his ſhield. The valour that had ſo long been ſmothered in his breaſt, broke forth at once; he ruſhed impetuouſly on the Knight, whoſe pride and wrath were not leſs powerful incentives to hardy deeds. The combat was furious,

furious, but not long: *Theodore* wounded the Knight in three ſeveral places, and at laſt diſarmed him as he fainted by the loſs of blood. The peaſant, who had fled on the firſt onſet, had given the alarm to ſome of *Manfred*'s domeſtics, who by his orders were diſperſed through the foreſt in purſuit of *Iſabella*. They came up as the Knight fell, whom they ſoon diſcovered to be the noble ſtranger. *Theodore*, notwithſtanding his hatred to *Manfred*, could not behold the victory he had gained without emotions of pity and generoſity: But he was more touched, when he learned the quality of his adverſary, and was informed that he was no retainer, but an enemy of *Manfred*. He aſſiſted the ſervants of the latter in diſarming the Knight, and in endeavouring to ſtaunch the blood that flowed from his wounds. The Knight recovering his ſpeech, ſaid in a faint and faltering voice, generous foe, we have both been in an error: I took thee for an inſtrument of the tyrant; I perceive thou haſt made

the

the like miſtake—it is too late for excuſes—I faint—if *Iſabella* is at hand—call her—I have important ſecrets to——He is dying! ſaid one of the attendants; has nobody a crucifix about them? *Andrea*, do thou pray over him—fetch ſome water, ſaid *Theodore*, and pour it down his throat, while I haſten to the Princeſs——ſaying this, he flew to *Iſabella*, and in few words told her modeſtly, that he had been ſo unfortunate by miſtake as to wound a gentleman from her father's court, who wiſhed e'er he died to impart ſomething of conſequence to her. The Princeſs, who had been tranſported at hearing the voice of *Theodore* as he called to her to come forth, was aſtoniſhed at what ſhe heard. Suffering herſelf to be conducted by *Theodore*, the new proof of whoſe valour recalled her diſperſed ſpirits, ſhe came where the bleeding Knight lay ſpeechleſs on the ground—but her fears returned, when ſhe beheld the domeſtics of *Manfred*. She would again have fled, if *Theodore* had not made her obſerve that they were unarmed,

armed, and had not threatened them with inſtant death, if they ſhoud dare to ſeize the Princeſs. The ſtranger, opening his eyes, and beholding a woman, ſaid—art thou—pray tell me truly—art thou *Iſabella* of *Vicenza*? I am; ſaid ſhe: good heaven reſtore thee!——Then thou——then thou——ſaid the Knight, ſtruggling for utterance——ſeeſt—thy father—give me one—oh! amazement! horror! what do I hear! what do I ſee! cried *Iſabella*. My father! you my father! how came you here, Sir, for heaven's ſake ſpeak!——oh! run for help, or he will expire!——'Tis moſt true, ſaid the wounded Knight, exerting all his force; I am *Frederic* thy father—yes, I came to deliver thee——It will not be—give me a parting kiſs, and take——Sir, ſaid *Theodore*, do not exhauſt yourſelf: ſuffer us to convey you to the caſtle——to the caſtle! ſaid *Iſabella*; is there no help nearer than the caſtle? would you expoſe my father to the tyrant? if he goes thither, I dare not accompany him——and yet, can I

leave

leave him! my child, ſaid *Frederick*, it matters not for me whither I am carried: A few minutes will place me beyond danger — but while I have eyes to doat on thee, forſake me not, dear *Iſabella!* This brave Knight—I know not who he is, will protect thy innocence——Sir, you will not abandon my child, will you! *Theodore* ſhedding tears over his victim, and vowing to guard the Princeſs at the expence of his life, perſuaded *Frederic* to ſuffer himſelf to be conducted to the caſtle. They placed him on a horſe belonging to one of the domeſtics, after binding up his wounds as well as they were able. *Theodore* marched by his ſide; and the afflicted *Iſabella*, who could not bear to quit him, followed mournfully behind.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE ſorrowful troop no ſooner arrived at the caſtle, than they were met by *Hippolita* and *Matilda*, whom *Iſabella* had ſent one of the domeſtics before to advertiſe of their approach. The Ladies cauſing *Frederic* to be conveyed into the neareſt chamber, retired, while the ſurgeons examined his wounds. *Matilda* bluſhed at ſeeing *Theodore* and *Iſabella* together; but endeavoured to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's miſchance. The ſurgeons ſoon came to acquaint *Hippolita* that none of the Marquis's wounds were dangerous; and that he was deſirous of ſeeing his daughter and the Princeſſes. *Theodore*, under pretence of expreſſing his joy at being freed from his apprehenſions of the combat being fatal to *Frederic*, could not reſiſt the

impulſe of following *Matilda*. Her eyes were ſo often caſt down on meeting his, that *Iſabella*, who regarded *Theodore* as attentively as he gazed on *Matilda*, ſoon divined who the object was that he had told her in the cave engaged his affections. While this mute ſcene paſſed, *Hippolita* demanded of *Frederic* the cauſe of his having taken that myſterious courſe for reclaiming his daughter; and threw in various apologies to excuſe her Lord for the match contracted between their children. *Frederic*, however incenſed againſt *Manfred*, was not inſenſible to the courteſy and benevolence of *Hippolita*: But he was ſtill more ſtruck with the lovely form of *Matilda*. Wiſhing to detain them by his bedſide, he informed *Hippolita* of his ſtory. He told her, that, while priſoner to the infidels, he had dreamed that his daughter, of whom he had learned no news ſince his captivity, was detained in a caſtle, where ſhe was in danger of the moſt dreadful misfortunes: And that if he obtained his liberty, and repaired to a wood

near

near *Joppa*, he would learn more. Alarmed at this dream, and incapable of obeying the direction given by it, his chains became more grievous than ever. But while his thoughts were occupied on the means of obtaining his liberty, he received the agreeable news that the confederate Princes, who were warring in *Paleſtine*, had paid his ranſom. He inſtantly ſet out for the wood that had been marked in his dream. For three days he and his attendants had wandered in the foreſt without ſeeing a human form: But on the evening of the third they came to a cell, in which they found a venerable hermit in the agonies of death. Applying rich cordials, they brought the ſaint-like man to his ſpeech. My ſons, ſaid he, I am bounden to your charity — but it is in vain — I am going to my eternal reſt — yet I die with the ſatisfaction of performing the will of heaven. When firſt I repaired to this ſolitude, after ſeeing my country become a prey to unbelievers — it is alas! above fifty years ſince I was witneſs

to that dreadful ſcene! St. *Nicholas* appeared to me, and revealed a ſecret, which he bad me never diſcloſe to mortal man, but on my death-bed. This is that tremendous hour, and ye are no doubt the choſen warriours to whom I was ordered to reveal my truſt. As ſoon as ye have done the laſt offices to this wretched corſe, dig under the ſeventh tree on the left-hand of this poor cave, and your pains will——Oh! good heaven receive my ſoul! With thoſe words the devout man breathed his laſt. By break of day, continued *Frederic*, when we had committed the holy relicks to earth, we dug according to direction——but what was our aſtoniſhment, when about the depth of ſix feet we diſcovered an enormous ſabre—the very weapon yonder in the court. On the blade, which was then partly out of the ſcabbard, though ſince cloſed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines——no; excuſe me, Madam, added the Marquis, turning to *Hippolita*, if I forbear to repeat them; I reſpect your ſex and

rank,

rank, and would not be guilty of offending your ear with ſounds injurious to ought that is dear to you—He pauſed. *Hippolita* trembled. She did not doubt but *Frederic* was deſtined by heaven to accompliſh the fate that ſeemed to threaten her houſe. Looking with anxious fondneſs at *Matilda*, a ſilent tear ſtole down her cheek: But recollecting herſelf, ſhe ſaid; proceed, my Lord: Heaven does nothing in vain: Mortals muſt receive its divine beheſts with lowlineſs and ſubmiſſion. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees. Repeat the ſentence, my Lord; we liſten reſigned. *Frederic* was grieved that he had proceeded ſo far. The dignity and patient firmneſs of *Hippolita* penetrated him with reſpect, and the tender ſilent affection with which the Princeſs and her daughter regarded each other, melted him almoſt to tears. Yet apprehenſive that his forbearance to obey, would be more alarming, he repeated in a faltering and low voice the following lines:

Where e'er a caſque that ſuits this ſword is found,
With perils is thy daughter compaſs'd round,
Alfonſo's *blood alone can ſave the maid,*
And quiet a long reſtleſs Prince's ſhade.

What is there in theſe lines, ſaid *Theodore* impatiently, that affects theſe Princeſſes? why were they to be ſhocked by a myſterious delicacy, that has ſo little foundation? Your words are rude, young man, ſaid the Marquis; and tho' fortune has favoured you once——my honoured Lord, ſaid *Iſabella*, who reſented *Theodore*'s warmth, which ſhe perceived was dictated by his ſentiments for *Matilda*, diſcompoſe not yourſelf for the gloſing of a peaſant's ſon: He forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accuſtomed——*Hippolita*, concerned at the heat that had ariſen, checked *Theodore* for his boldneſs, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and changing the converſation, demanded of *Frederic* where he had left her Lord? As the Marquis was going to reply, they heard a noiſe without,

without, and rising to inquire the cauſe, *Manfred*, *Jerome*, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. *Manfred* advanced haſtily towards *Frederic*'s bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumſtances of the combat, when ſtarting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou? thou dreadful ſpectre! is my hour come? —my deareſt, gracious Lord, cried *Hippolita*, claſping him in her arms, what is it you ſee? why do you fix your eye-balls thus!—What! cried *Manfred* breathleſs—doſt thou ſee nothing, *Hippolita?* is this ghaſtly phantom ſent to me alone—to me, who did not——for mercy's ſweeteſt ſelf, my Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*, reſume your ſoul, command your reaſon. There is none here, but us, your friends—what is not that *Alfonſo?* cried *Manfred:* Doſt thou not ſee him? can it be my brain's delirium?—This! my Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*; this is *Theodore*, the youth, who has been ſo unfortunate—*Theodore!*

ſaid *Manfred* mournfully, and ſtriking his forehead—*Theodore*, or a phantom, he has unhinged the ſoul of *Manfred*—but how comes he here? and how comes he in armour? I believe he went in ſearch of *Iſabella:* Said *Hippolita.* Of *Iſabella!* ſaid *Manfred*, relapſing into rage—yes, yes, that is not doubtful——but how did he eſcape from durance in which I left him? was it *Iſabella*, or this hypocritical old Friar, that procured his enlargement?—and would a parent be criminal, my Lord, ſaid *Theodore*, if he meditated the deliverance of his child? *Jerome* amazed to hear himſelf in a manner accuſed by his ſon, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend, how *Theodore* had eſcaped, how he came to be armed, and to encounter *Frederic.* Still he would not venture to aſk any queſtions that might tend to inflame *Manfred*'s wrath againſt his ſon. *Jerome*'s ſilence convinced *Manfred* that he had contrived *Theodore*'s releaſe—and is it thus, thou ungrateful old man, ſaid the Prince addreſſing

addreſſing himſelf to the Friar, that thou repayeſt mine and *Hippolita*'s bounties? And not content with traverſing my heart's neareſt wiſhes, thou armeſt thy baſtard, and bringeſt him into my own caſtle to inſult me! My Lord, ſaid *Theodore*, you wrong my father: Nor he nor I are capable of harbouring a thought againſt your peace. Is it inſolence thus to ſurrender myſelf to your Highneſs's pleaſure? added he, laying his ſword reſpectfully at *Manfred*'s feet. Behold my boſom; ſtrike, my Lord, if you ſuſpect that a diſloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a ſentiment engraven on my heart, that does not venerate you and yours. The grace and fervour with which *Theodore* uttered theſe words, intereſted every perſon preſent in his favour. Even *Manfred* was touched—— yet ſtill poſſeſſed with his reſemblance to *Alfonſo*, his admiration was daſhed with ſecret horror. Riſe; ſaid he; thy life is not my preſent purpoſe.——But tell me thy hiſtory, and how thou cameſt connected with this old traitor here.

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My Lord, ſaid *Jerome* eagerly——peace? impoſtor! ſaid *Manfred*; I will not have him prompted. My Lord, ſaid *Theodore*, I want no aſſiſtance: My ſtory is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to *Algiers* with my mother, who had been taken by corſairs from the coaſt of *Sicily*. She died of grief in leſs than a twelvemonth——the tears guſhed from *Jerome's* eyes, on whoſe countenance a thouſand anxious paſſions ſtood expreſſed. Before ſhe died, continued *Theodore*, ſhe bound a writing about my arm under my garments, which told me I was the ſon of the Count *Falconara*— it is moſt true, ſaid *Jerome*; I am that wretched father—again I enjoin thee ſilence; ſaid *Manfred:* Proceed. I remained in ſlavery, ſaid *Theodore*, until within theſe two years, when attending on my maſter in his cruizes, I was delivered by a Chriſtian veſſel, which overpowered the pirate; and diſcovering myſelf to the captain, he generouſly put me on ſhore in *Sicily*——but alas! inſtead of finding a father, I learned that his eſtate,

which

which was ſituated on the coaſt, had, during his abſence, been laid waſte by the Rover, who had carried my mother and me into captivity; That his caſtle had been burnt to the ground, and that my father on his return had ſold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of *Naples*, but where no man could inform me. Deſtitute and friendleſs, hopeleſs almoſt of attaining the tranſport of a parent's embrace, I took the firſt opportunity of ſetting ſail for *Naples*, from whence, within theſe ſix days, I wandered into this province, ſtill ſupporting myſelf by the labour of my hands; nor until yeſter-morn did I believe that heaven had reſerved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my Lord, is *Theodore*'s ſtory. I am bleſſed beyond my hope in finding a father; I am unfortunate beyond my deſert in having incurred your Highneſs's diſpleaſure. He ceaſed. A murmur of approbation gently aroſe from the audience. This is not all; ſaid *Frederic*: I am bound in honour

to

to add what he ſuppreſſes. Though he is modeſt, I muſt be generous——he is one of the braveſt youths on Chriſtian ground. He is warm too; and from the ſhort knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myſelf for his veracity: If what he reports of himſelf were not true, he would not utter it—and for me, youth, I honour a frankneſs which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didſt offend me: yet the noble blood which flows in thy veins, may well be allowed to boil out, when it has ſo recently traced itſelf to its ſource. Come, my Lord [turning to *Manfred*] if I can pardon him, ſurely you may: It is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a ſpectre. This bitter taunt galled the ſoul of *Manfred*. If beings from another world, replied he haughtily, have power to impreſs my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do; nor could a ſtripling's arm — my Lord, interrupted *Hippolita*, your gueſt has occaſion for repoſe: Shall we not leave him to his reſt? Saying this, and taking *Manfred* by

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the hand, ſhe took leave of *Frederic*, and led the company forth. The Prince, not ſorry to quit a converſation, which recalled to mind the diſcovery he had made of his moſt ſecret ſenſations, ſuffered himſelf to be conducted to his own apartment, after permitting *Theodore*, tho' under engagement to return to the caſtle on the morrow [a condition the young man gladly accepted] to retire with his father to the convent. *Matilda* and *Iſabella* were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wiſh for farther converſe that night. They ſeparated each to her chamber, with more expreſſions of ceremony and fewer of affection, than had paſſed between them ſince their childhood.

If they parted with ſmall cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience, as ſoon as the ſun was riſen. Their minds were in a ſituation that excluded ſleep, and each recollected a thouſand queſtions which ſhe wiſhed ſhe had put to the other overnight. *Matilda* reflected that *Iſa-*

bella

bella had been twice delivered by *Theodore* in very critical ſituations, which ſhe could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in *Frederic*'s chamber; but that might have been to diſguiſe his paſſion for *Iſabella* from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up——She wiſhed to know the truth, leſt ſhe ſhould wrong her friend by entertaining a paſſion for *Iſabella*'s lover. Thus jealouſy prompted, and at the ſame time borrowed an excuſe from friendſhip to juſtify its curioſity.

Iſabella, not leſs reſtleſs, had better foundation for her ſuſpicions. Both *Theodore*'s tongue and eyes had told her his heart was engaged—it was true—yet perhaps *Matilda* might not correſpond to his paſſion—ſhe had ever appeared inſenſible to love: All her thoughts were ſet on heaven—why did I diſſuade her; ſaid *Iſabella* to herſelf: I am puniſhed for my generoſity—but when did they meet? where?—it cannot be: I have deceived myſelf—perhaps laſt night was the firſt time they ever beheld each other

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—it muſt be ſome other object that has prepoſſeſſed his affections—if it is, I am not ſo unhappy, as I thought; if it is not my friend *Matilda*—how! can I ſtoop to wiſh for the affection of a man, who rudely and unneceſſarily acquainted me with his indifference? and that at the very moment in which common courteſy demanded at leaſt expreſſions of civility. I will go to my dear *Matilda*, who will confirm me in this becoming pride——man is falſe—I will adviſe with her on taking the veil: She will rejoice to find me in this diſpoſition; and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppoſe her inclination for the cloyſter. In this frame of mind, and determined to open her heart entirely to *Matilda*, ſhe went to that Princeſs's chamber, whom ſhe found already dreſſed, and leaning penſively on her arm. This attitude, ſo correſpondent to what ſhe felt herſelf, revived *Iſabella*'s ſuſpicions, and deſtroyed the confidence ſhe had purpoſed to place in her friend. They bluſhed at meeting, and were too much no-

vices to diſguiſe their ſenſations with addreſs. After ſome unmeaning queſtions and replies, *Matilda* demanded of *Iſabella* the cauſe of her flight? the latter, who had almoſt forgotten *Manfred*'s paſſion, ſo entirely was ſhe occupied by her own, concluding that *Matilda* referred to her laſt eſcape from the convent, which had occaſioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, *Martelli* brought word to the convent that your mother was dead—oh! ſaid *Matilda* interrupting her, *Bianca* has explained that miſtake to me: on ſeeing me faint, ſhe cried out, the Princeſs is dead! and *Martelli* who had come for the uſual dole to the caſtle—and what made you faint? ſaid *Iſabella*, indifferent to the reſt. *Matilda* bluſhed, and ſtammered — my father— he was ſitting in judgment on a criminal—— what criminal? ſaid *Iſabella* eagerly—a young man: ſaid *Matilda*--I believe--I think it was that young man that—what, *Theodore?* ſaid *Iſabella*. Yes; anſwered ſhe; I never ſaw him before; I do not know how he had offended my fa-

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ther—but as he has been of ſervice to you, I am glad my Lord has pardoned him—ſerved me? replied *Iſabella*; do you term it ſerving me, to wound my father, and almoſt occaſion his death! Though it is but ſince yeſterday that I am bleſſed with knowing a parent, I hope *Matilda* does not think I am ſuch a ſtranger to filial tenderneſs as not to reſent the boldneſs of that audacious youth, and that it is impoſſible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm againſt the author of my being. No, *Matilda*, my heart abhors him; and if you ſtill retain the friendſhip for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will deteſt a man who has been on the point of making me miſerable for ever. *Matilda* held down her head, and replied; I hope my deareſt *Iſabella* does not doubt her *Matilda*'s friendſhip: I never beheld that youth until yeſterday; he is almoſt a ſtranger to me: But as the ſurgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbour uncharitable re-

ſentment againſt one, who I am perſuaded did not know the Marquis was related to you. You plead his cauſe very pathetically, ſaid *Iſabella*, conſidering he is ſo much a ſtranger to you! I am miſtaken, or he returns your charity. What mean you? ſaid *Matilda*. Nothing: Said *Iſabella*, repenting that ſhe had given *Matilda* a hint of *Theodore*'s inclination for her. Then changing the diſcourſe, ſhe aſked *Matilda* what occaſioned *Manfred* to take *Theodore* for a ſpectre? Bleſs me, ſaid *Matilda*, did not you obſerve his extreme reſemblance to the portrait of *Alfonſo* in the gallery? I took notice of it to *Bianca* even before I ſaw him in armour; but with the helmet on, he is the very image of that picture. I do not much obſerve pictures; ſaid *Iſabella*: Much leſs have I examined this young man ſo attentively as you ſeem to have done——ah! *Matilda*, your heart is in danger——but let me warn you as a friend—he has owned to me that he is in love; it cannot be with you, for yeſterday was the firſt time you ever met——was

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it not? certainly: replied *Matilda*; but why does my dearest *Iſabella* conclude from any thing I have ſaid, that—ſhe pauſed—then continuing; he ſaw you firſt, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you—may you be happy, *Iſabella*, whatever is the fate of *Matilda!* My lovely friend, ſaid *Iſabella*, whoſe heart was too honeſt to reſiſt a kind expreſſion, it is you that *Theodore* admires; I ſaw it; I am perſuaded of it; nor ſhall a thought of my own happineſs ſuffer me to interfere with yours. This frankneſs drew tears from the gentle *Matilda*; and jealouſy that for a moment had raiſed a coolneſs between theſe amiable maidens, ſoon gave way to the natural ſincerity and candour of their ſouls. Each confeſſed to the other the impreſſion that *Theodore* had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a ſtruggle of generoſity, each inſiſting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length, the dignity of *Iſabella*'s virtue reminding her of the preference which

Theodore had almoſt declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her paſſion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.

During this conteſt of amity, *Hippolita* entered her daughter's chamber. Madam, ſaid ſhe to *Iſabella*, you have ſo much tenderneſs for *Matilda*, and intereſt yourſelf ſo kindly in whatever affects our wretched houſe, that I can have no ſecrets with my child, which are not proper for you to hear. The Princeſſes were all attention and anxiety. Know then, Madam, continued *Hippolita*, and you, my deareſt *Matilda*, that being convinced by all the events of theſe two laſt ominous days, that heaven purpoſes the ſceptre of *Otranto* ſhould paſs from *Manfred*'s hands into thoſe of the Marquis *Frederic*, I have been perhaps inſpired with the thought of averting our total deſtruction by the union of our rival houſes. With this view I have been propoſing to *Manfred* my Lord to tender this dear, dear child to *Frederic* your father —me to Lord *Frederic!* cried *Matilda*—good heavens!

vens! my gracious mother——and have you named it to my father? I have: Said *Hippolita:* He liſtened benignly to my propoſal, and is gone to break it to the Marquis. Ah! wretched Princeſs! cried *Iſabella*; what haſt thou done! what ruin has thy inadvertent goodneſs been preparing for thyſelf, for me, and for *Matilda!* Ruin from me to you and to my child! ſaid *Hippolita*; what can this mean? Alas! ſaid *Iſabella*, the purity of your own heart prevents your ſeeing the depravity of others. *Manfred*, your Lord, that impious man——hold; ſaid *Hippolita*, you muſt not in my preſence, young Lady, mention *Manfred* with diſreſpect: He is my lord and huſband, and—will not long be ſo, ſaid *Iſabella*, if his wicked purpoſes can be carried into execution. This language amazes me; ſaid *Hippolita*. Your feeling, *Iſabella*, is warm; but until this hour I never knew it betray you into intemperance. What deed of *Manfred* authorizes you to treat him as a murderer, an aſſaſſin? Thou virtuous, and too credulous Prin-

ceſs! replied *Iſabella*; it is not thy life he aims at—it is to ſeparate himſelf from thee! to divorce thee! to—to divorce me! to divorce my mother! cried *Hippolita* and *Matilda* at once—yes; ſaid *Iſabella*; and to complete his crime, he meditates——I cannot ſpeak it! What can ſurpaſs what thou haſt already uttered? ſaid *Matilda*. *Hippolita* was ſilent. Grief choaked her ſpeech; and the recollection of *Manfred*'s late ambiguous diſcourſes confirmed what ſhe heard. Excellent, dear Lady! Madam! Mother! cried *Iſabella*, flinging herſelf at *Hippolita*'s feet in a tranſport of paſſion; truſt me, believe me, I will die a thouſand deaths ſooner than conſent to injure you, than yield to ſo odious—oh!—This is too much! cried *Hippolita*: What crimes does one crime ſuggeſt! riſe, dear *Iſabella*; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! *Matilda*, this ſtroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child; and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is *thy* father ſtill!——but you are my mother too; ſaid *Matilda* fervently; and

and *you* are virtuous, *you* are guiltleſs!——Oh! muſt not I, muſt not I complain? You muſt not: Said *Hippolita*—come, all will yet be well, *Manfred*, in the agony for the loſs of thy brother, knew not what he ſaid: perhaps *Iſabella* miſunderſtood him: His heart is good—and, my child, thou knoweſt not all! There is a deſtiny hangs over us; the hand of Providence is ſtretched out—Oh! could I but ſave thee from the wreck!——yes, continued ſhe in a firmer tone; perhaps the ſacrifice of myſelf may atone for all—I will go and offer myſelf to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monaſtery, and waſte the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and—the Prince! Thou art as much too good for this world, ſaid *Iſabella*, as *Manfred* is execrable—but think not, Lady, that thy weakneſs ſhall determine for me. I ſwear, hear me all ye angels—ſtop, I adjure thee; cried *Hippolita*: Remember thou doſt not depend on thyſelf; thou haſt a father

—my father is too pious, too noble, interrupted *Iſabella*, to command an impious deed. But ſhould he command it; can a father enjoin a curſed act? I was contracted to the ſon? can I wed the father?——no, Madam, no; force ſhould not drag me to *Manfred*'s hated bed. I loath him, I abhor him: Divine and human laws forbid—and my friend, my deareſt *Matilda!* would I wound her tender ſoul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another—Oh! ſhe is the mother of both! cried *Matilda:* Can we, can we, *Iſabella*, adore her too much? My lovely children, ſaid the touched *Hippolita*, your tenderneſs overpowers me—but I muſt not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourſelves: Heaven, our fathers, and our huſbands muſt decide for us. Have patience until you hear what *Manfred* and *Frederic* have determined. If the Marquis accepts *Matilda*'s hand, I know ſhe will readily obey. Heaven may interpoſe and prevent the reſt. What means my child? con-

tinued ſhe, ſeeing *Matilda* fall at her feet with a flood of ſpeechleſs tears—— but no; anſwer me not, my daughter: I muſt not hear a word againſt the pleaſure of thy father. Oh! doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you! ſaid *Matilda*. But can I, moſt reſpected of women, can I experience all this tenderneſs, this world of goodneſs, and conceal a thought from the beſt of mothers? What art thou going to utter? ſaid *Iſabella* trembling. Recollect thyſelf, *Matilda*. No, *Iſabella*, ſaid the Princeſs, I ſhould not deſerve this incomparable parent, if the inmoſt receſſes of my ſoul harboured a thought without her permiſſion—nay, I have offended her; I have ſuffered a paſſion to enter my heart without her avowal—but here I diſclaim it; here I vow to heaven and her—My child! my child! ſaid *Hippolita*, what words are theſe! what new calamities has fate in ſtore for us! Thou, a paſſion! Thou, in this hour of deſtruction—Oh! I ſee all my guilt! ſaid *Matilda*. I abhor myſelf, if I coſt

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my mother a pang. She is the deareſt thing I have on earth—oh! I will never, never behold him more! *Iſabella*, ſaid *Hippolita*, thou art conſcious to this unhappy ſecret, whatever it is. Speak—what! cried *Matilda*, have I ſo forfeited my mother's love, that ſhe will not permit me even to ſpeak my own guilt? oh! wretched, wrethed *Matilda!* Thou art too cruel; ſaid *Iſabella* to *Hippolita:* Canſt thou behold this anguiſh of a virtuous mind, and not commiſerate it? Not pity my child! ſaid *Hippolita*, catching *Matilda* in her arms—Oh! I know ſhe is good, ſhe is all virtue, all tenderneſs, and duty. I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope! The Princeſſes then revealed to *Hippolita* their mutual inclination for *Theodore*, and the purpoſe of *Iſabella* to reſign him to *Matilda*. *Hippolita* blamed their imprudence, and ſhewed them the improbability that either father would conſent to beſtow his heireſs on ſo poor a man, though nobly born. Some comfort it gave her to find their paſſion of ſo recent a date,

and

and that *Theodore* had had but little cauſe to ſuſpect it in either. She ſtrictly enjoined them to avoid all correſpondence with him. This *Matilda* fervently promiſed: But *Iſabella*, who flattered herſelf that ſhe meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him; and made no reply. I will go to the convent, ſaid *Hippolita*, and order new maſſes to be ſaid for a deliverance from theſe calamities.—Oh! my mother, ſaid *Matilda*, you mean to quit us: You mean to take ſanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of purſuing his fatal intention. Alas! on my knees I ſupplicate you to forbear—— will you leave me a prey to *Frederic?* I will follow you to the convent—Be at peace, my child: ſaid *Hippolita:* I will return inſtantly. I will never abandon thee, until I know it is the will of heaven, and for thy benefit. Do not deceive me: ſaid *Matilda.* I will not marry *Frederic* until thou commandeſt it.—Alas! What will become of me? Why that exclamation? ſaid

ſaid *Hippolita*. I have promiſed thee to return ——ah! my mother, replied *Matilda*, ſtay and ſave me from myſelf. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's ſeverity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recal it. No more: Said *Hippolita:* thou muſt not relapſe, *Matilda*. I can quit *Theodore*, ſaid ſhe, but muſt I wed another? let me attend thee to the altar, and ſhut myſelf from the world for ever. Thy fate depends on thy father; ſaid *Hippolita:* I have ill beſtowed my tenderneſs, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond him. Adieu! my child: I go to pray for thee.

Hippolita's real purpoſe was to demand of *Jerome*, whether in conſcience ſhe might not conſent to the divorce. She had oft urged *Manfred* to reſign the principality, which the delicacy of her conſcience rendered an hourly burthen to her. Theſe ſcruples concurred to make the ſeparation from her huſband appear leſs dread-

dreadful to her, than it would have ſeemed in any other ſituation.

Jerome, at quitting the caſtle overnight, had queſtioned *Theodore* ſeverely why he had accuſed him to *Manfred* of being privy to his eſcape. *Theodore* owned it had been with deſign to prevent *Manfred*'s ſuſpicion from alighting on *Matilda*; and added, the holineſs of *Jerome*'s life and character ſecured him from the tyrant's wrath. *Jerome* was heartily grieved to diſcover his ſon's inclination for that Princeſs; and leaving him to his reſt; promiſed in the morning to acquaint him with important reaſons for conquering his paſſion. *Theodore*, like *Iſabella*, was too recently acquainted with parental authority to ſubmit to its deciſions againſt the impulſe of his heart. He had little curioſity to learn the Friar's reaſons, and leſs diſpoſition to obey them. The lovely *Matilda* had made ſtronger impreſſions on him than filial affection. All night he pleaſed himſelf with viſions of love; and it was not till late after the morning-office,

that

that he recollected the Friars commands to attend him at *Alfonſo*'s tomb.

Young man, ſaid *Jerome*, when he ſaw him, this tardineſs does not pleaſe me. Have a father's commands already ſo little weight? *Theodore* made aukward excuſes, and attributed his delay to having overſlept himſelf. And on whom were thy dreams employed? ſaid the Friar ſternly. His ſon bluſhed. Come, come, reſumed the Friar, inconſiderate youth, this muſt not be; Eradicate this guilty paſſion from thy breaſt—guilty paſſion! cried *Theodore*: Can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modeſty? It is ſinful, replied the Friar, to cheriſh thoſe whom heaven has doomed to deſtruction. A tyrant's race muſt be ſwept from the earth to the third and fourth generation. Will heaven viſit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty? ſaid *Theodore*. The fair *Matilda* has virtues enough—to undo thee: Interrupted *Jerome*. Haſt thou ſo ſoon forgotten that twice the ſavage *Manfred* has pronounced thy ſentence?

tence? Not have I forgotten, Sir, ſaid *Theodore*, that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits. The injuries thou haſt received from *Manfred*'s race, ſaid the Friar, are beyond what thou canſt conceive.—Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument reſt the aſhes of the good *Alfonſo*; a Prince adorned with every virtue: The father of his people! the delight of mankind! Kneel, head-ſtrong boy, and liſt, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every ſentiment from thy ſoul, but ſenſations of ſacred vengeance—*Alfonſo!* much injured Prince! let thy unſatisfied ſhade ſit awful on the troubled air, while theſe trembling lips—ha! who comes there?——The moſt wretched of women! ſaid *Hippolita*, entering the choir. Good Father, art thou at leiſure?——but why this kneeling youth? what means the horror imprinted on each countenance? why at this venerable tomb —alas! haſt thou ſeen aught? We were pour-

ing forth our oriſons to heaven, replied the Friar with ſome confuſion, to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, Lady! thy ſpotleſs ſoul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of theſe days but too ſpeakingly denounce againſt thy houſe. I pray fervently to heaven to divert them: ſaid the pious Princeſs. Thou knoweſt it has been the occupation of my life to wreſt a bleſſing for my Lord and my harmleſs children—One alas! is taken from me! would heaven but hear me for my poor *Matilda!* Father! intercede for her!—Every heart will bleſs her: Cried *Theodore* with rapture—Be dumb, raſh youth! ſaid *Jerome.* And thou fond Princeſs contend not with the Powers above! the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: Bleſs his holy name, and ſubmit to his decrees. I do moſt devoutly: Said *Hippolita:* But will he not ſpare my only comfort? muſt *Matilda* periſh too?—ah! Father, I came—but diſmiſs thy ſon. No ear but thine muſt hear what I have to utter.

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May heaven grant thy every wiſh, moſt excellent Princeſs! ſaid *Theodore* retiring. *Jerome* frowned.

Hippolita then acquainted the Friar with the propoſal ſhe had ſuggeſted to *Manfred*, his approbation of it, and the tender of *Matilda* that he was gone to make to *Frederic*. *Jerome* could not conceal his diſlike of the motion, which he covered under pretence of the improbability that *Frederic*, the neareſt of blood to *Alfonſo*, and who was come to claim his ſucceſſion, would yield to an alliance with the uſurper of his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the Friar, when *Hippolita* confeſſed her readineſs not to oppoſe the ſeparation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquieſcence. The Friar catched eagerly at her requeſt of his advice, and without explaining his averſion to the propoſed marriage of *Manfred* and *Iſabella*, he painted to *Hippolita* in the moſt alarming colours the ſinfulneſs of her conſent, denounced judgments againſt her if ſhe complied, and en-

joined her in the ſevereſt terms to treat any ſuch propoſition with every mark of indignation and refuſal.

Manfred, in the mean time, had broken his purpoſe to *Frederic*, and propoſed the double marriage. That weak Prince, who had been ſtruck with the charms of *Matilda*, liſtened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to *Manfred*, whom he ſaw but little hope of diſpoſſeſſing by force; and flattering himſelf that no iſſue might ſucceed from the union of his daughter with the Tyrant, he looked upon his own ſucceſſion to the principality as facilitated by wedding *Matilda*. He made faint oppoſition to the propoſal; affecting, for form only, not to acquieſce unleſs *Hippolita* ſhould conſent to the divorce. *Manfred* took that upon himſelf. Tranſported with his ſucceſs, and impatient to ſee himſelf in a ſituation to expect ſons, he haſtened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that ſhe was abſent at the convent. His

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guilt ſuggeſted to him that ſhe had probably been informed by *Iſabella* of his purpoſe. He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until ſhe could raiſe obſtacles to their divorce; and the ſuſpicions he had already entertained of *Jerome*, made him apprehend that the Friar would not only traverſe his views, but might have inſpired *Hippolita* with the reſolution of taking ſanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its ſucceſs, *Manfred* haſtened to the convent, and arrived there, as the Friar was earneſtly exhorting the Princeſs never to yield to the divorce.

Madam, ſaid *Manfred*, what buſineſs drew you hither? why did you not await my return from the Marquis? I came to implore a bleſſing on your councils: Replied *Hippolita*. My councils do not need a Friar's intervention: Said *Manfred*——and of all men living is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with? Profane Prince! ſaid *Jerome*; is

it at the altar that thou chuſeſt to inſult the ſervants of the altar?—but, *Manfred*, thy impious ſchemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous Lady know them——nay, frown not, Prince. The church deſpiſes thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy curſt purpoſe of a divorce, until her ſentence be known, and here I lance her Anathema at thy head. Audacious rebel! ſaid *Manfred*, endeavouring to conceal the awe with which the Friar's words inſpired him; Doſt thou preſume to threaten thy lawful Prince? Thou art no lawful Prince; ſaid *Jerome*; thou art no Prince—go, diſcuſs thy claim with *Frederic*; and when that is done —— it is done: Replied *Manfred: Frederic* accepts *Matilda*'s hand, and is content to wave his claim, unleſs I have no male iſſue—as he ſpoke thoſe words three drops of blood fell from the noſe of *Alfonſo*'s ſtatue. *Manfred* turned pale, and the Princeſs ſunk on her knees. Behold! ſaid the Friar; mark this miraculous indication that the

blood

blood of *Alfonſo* will never mix with that of *Manfred!* My gracious Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*, let us ſubmit ourſelves to heaven. Think not thy ever obedient wife rebels againſt thy authority. I have no will but that of my Lord and the church. To that revered tribunal let us appeal. It does not depend on us to burſt the bonds that unite us. If the church ſhall approve the diſſolution of our marriage, be it ſo —I have but few years, and thoſe of ſorrow to paſs. Where can they be worn away ſo well as at the foot of this altar, in prayers for thine and *Matilda*'s ſafety?—but thou ſhalt not remain here until then: Said *Manfred.* Repair with me to the caſtle, and there I will adviſe on the proper meaſures for a divorce;—but this meddling Friar comes not thither: My hoſpitable roof ſhall never more harbour a traitor——and for thy Reverence's offspring, continued he, I baniſh him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no ſacred perſonage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds *Iſabella*, it ſhall

not be Father *Falconara*'s ſtarted-up ſon. They ſtart up, ſaid the Friar, who are ſuddenly beheld in the ſeat of lawful Princes; but they wither away like the graſs, and their place knows them no more. *Manfred* caſting a look of ſcorn at the Friar, led *Hippolita* forth; but at the door of the church, whiſpered one of his attendants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him inſtant notice, if any one from the caſtle ſhould repair thither.

CHAP. V.

EVERY reflection which *Manfred* made on the Friar's behaviour, conſpired to purſuade him that *Jerome* was privy to an amour between *Iſabella* and *Theodore*. But *Jerome*'s new preſumption, ſo diſſonant from his former meekneſs, ſuggeſted ſtill deeper apprehenſions. The Prince even ſuſpected that the Friar depended on ſome ſecret ſupport from *Frederic*, whoſe arrival

rival coinciding with the novel appearance of *Theodore* ſeemed to beſpeak a correſpondence. Still more was he troubled with the reſemblance of *Theodore* to *Alfonſo*'s portrait. The latter he knew had unqueſtionably died without iſſue. *Frederic* had conſented to beſtow *Iſabella* on him. Theſe contradictions agitated his mind with numberleſs pangs. He ſaw but two methods of extricating himſelf from his difficulties. The one was to reſign his dominions to the Marquis ——Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a poſſibility of his preſerving them to his poſterity, combated that thought. The other was to preſs his marriage with *Iſabella*. After long ruminating on theſe anxious thoughts, as he marched ſilently with *Hippolita* to the caſtle, he at laſt diſcourſed with that Princeſs on the ſubject of his diſquiet, and uſed every inſinuating and plauſible argument to extract her conſent to, even her promiſe of promoting the divorce. *Hippolita* needed little perſuaſion to bend her to

his pleaſure. She endeavoured to win him over to the meaſure of reſigning his dominions; but finding her exhortations fruitleſs, ſhe aſſured him, that as far as her conſcience would allow, ſhe would raiſe no oppoſition to a ſeparation, though without better founded ſcruples than what he yet alledged, ſhe would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was ſufficient to raiſe *Manfred*'s hopes. He truſted that his power and wealth would eaſily advance his ſuit at the court of *Rome*, whither he reſolved to engage *Frederic* to take a journey on purpoſe. That Prince had diſcovered ſo much paſſion for *Matilda*, that *Manfred* hoped to obtain all he wiſhed by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the Marquis ſhould appear more or leſs diſpoſed to co-operate in his views. Even the abſence of *Frederic* would be a material point gained, until he could take farther meaſures for his ſecurity.

Diſmiſſing

Diſmiſſing *Hippolita* to her apartment, he repaired to that of the Marquis; but croſſing the great hall through which he was to paſs, he met *Bianca*. That damſel he knew was in the confidence of both the young Ladies. It immediately occurred to him to ſift her on the ſubject of *Iſabella* and *Theodore*. Calling her aſide into the receſs of the oriel window of the hall, and ſoothing her with many fair words and promiſes, he demanded of her whether ſhe knew ought of the ſtate of *Iſabella*'s affections. I! my Lord! no, my Lord——yes, my Lord—poor Lady! ſhe is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds; but I tell her he will do well, don't your Highneſs think ſo? I do not aſk you replied *Manfred*, what ſhe thinks about her father: But you are in her ſecrets: Come, be a good girl and tell me; is there any young man—ha!—you underſtand me——Lord bleſs me! underſtand your Highneſs, no, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repoſe——I am not talking, replied the Prince impatiently, about

about her father: I know he will do well—— Bleſs me, I rejoice to hear your Highneſs ſay ſo; for though I thought it not right to let my young Lady deſpond, methought his Greatneſs had a wan look, and a ſomething—I remember when young *Ferdinand* was wounded by the *Venetian*——Thou anſwereſt from the point, interrupted *Manfred*; but here, take this jewel, perhaps that may fix thy attention—nay, no reverences; my favour ſhall not ſtop here—— come, tell me truly; how ſtands *Iſabella*'s heart. Well! your Highneſs has ſuch a way! ſaid *Bianca*—to be ſure——but can your Highneſs keep a ſecret? if it ſhould ever come out of your lips——it ſhall not, it ſhall not: Cried *Manfred*—nay, but ſwear, your Highneſs—by my halidame, if it ſhould ever be known that I ſaid it——why, truth is truth, I do not think my Lady *Iſabella* ever much affectioned my young Lord your Son——yet he was a ſweet youth as one ſhould ſee——I am ſure, if I had been a Princeſs—but bleſs me! I muſt attend

my

my Lady *Matilda*; ſhe will marvel what is become of me——ſtay; cried *Manfred*, thou haſt not ſatisfied my queſtion. Haſt thou ever carried any meſſage, any letter——I! good gracious! cried *Bianca*; I carry a letter? I would not to be a Queen. I hope your Highneſs thinks, though I am poor, I am honeſt—did your Highneſs never hear what Count *Marſigli* offered me, when he came a wooing to my Lady *Matilda?* I have not leiſure, ſaid *Manfred*, to liſten to thy tales. I do not queſtion thy honeſty: But it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has *Iſabella* been acquainted with *Theodore?* Nay, there is nothing can eſcape your Highneſs! ſaid *Bianca*—not that I know any thing of the matter—*Theodore*, to be ſure, is a proper young man, and, as my Lady *Matilda* ſays, the very image of good *Alfonſo:* Has not your Highneſs remarked it? yes, yes,—no—thou tortureſt me: Said *Manfred:* Where did they meet? when?——who! My Lady *Matilda?* ſaid *Bianca*. No,

no,

no, not *Matilda: Iſabella*; when did *Iſabella* firſt become acquainted with this *Theodore? Virgin Mary!* ſaid *Bianca*, how ſhould I know? Thou doſt know; ſaid *Manfred*; and I muſt know; I will——Lord! your Highneſs is not jealous of young *Theodore!* ſaid *Bianca*——jealous! no, no: Why ſhould I be jealous?—perhaps I mean to unite them—if I were ſure *Iſabella* would have no repugnance——repugnance! no, I'll warrant her; ſaid *Bianca*; he is as comely a youth as ever trod on Chriſtian ground: We are all in love with him, there is not a ſoul in the caſtle, but would be rejoiced to have him for our Prince——I mean, when it ſhall pleaſe heaven to call your Highneſs to itſelf—indeed! ſaid *Manfred*, has it gone ſo far! oh! this curſed Friar!—but I muſt not loſe time——go, *Bianca*, attend *Iſabella*; but I charge thee, not a word of what has paſſed. Find out how ſhe is affected towards *Theodore:* bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding ſtaircaſe:

caſe: I am going to viſit the Marquis, and will talk farther with thee at my return.

Manfred, after ſome general converſation, deſired *Frederic* to diſmiſs the two Knights his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As ſoon as they were alone, he began in artful guiſe to ſound the Marquis on the ſubject of *Matilda*; and finding him diſpoſed to his wiſh, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unleſs—at that inſtant *Bianca* burſt into the room with a wildneſs in her look and geſtures that ſpoke the utmoſt terror. Oh! my Lord, my Lord! cried ſhe; we are all undone! it is come again! it is come again! What is come again! cried *Manfred* amazed!—oh! the hand! the Giant! the hand!—ſupport me! I am terrified out of my ſenſes: Cried *Bianca*, I will not ſleep in the caſtle to-night; where ſhall I go? my things may come after me to-morrow—would I had been content to wed *Franceſco!* this comes of ambition! What has terrified

rified thee thus, young woman? ſaid the Marquis: Thou art ſafe here; be not alarmed. Oh! your Greatneſs is wonderfully good, ſaid *Bianca*, but I dare not—no, pray, let me go—I had rather leave every thing behind me, than ſtay another hour under this roof. Go to, thou haſt loſt thy ſenſes: Said *Manfred*. Interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters—my Lord, this wench is ſubject to fits—come with me, *Bianca*——oh! the Saints! no, ſaid *Bianca*—for certain it comes to warn your Highneſs; why ſhould it appear to me elſe? I ſay my prayers morning and evening—oh! if your Highneſs had believed *Diego!* 'Tis the ſame hand that he ſaw the foot to in the gallery-chamber—Father *Jerome* has often told us the prophecy would be out one of theſe days—*Bianca*, ſaid he, mark my words——thou raveſt; ſaid *Manfred* in a rage; be gone, and keep theſe fooleries to frighten thy companions—what! my Lord, cried *Bianca*, do you think I have ſeen nothing? go to the foot of the

great ſtairs yourſelf——as I live I ſaw it. Saw what? tell us, fair maid, what thou haſt ſeen: Said *Frederic.* Can your Highneſs liſten, ſaid *Manfred,* to the delirium of a ſilly wench, who has heard ſtories of apparitions until ſhe believes them? This is more than fancy, ſaid the Marquis; her terror is too natural and too ſtrongly impreſſed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus. Yes, my Lord, thank your Greatneſs; ſaid *Bianca*—I believe I look very pale; I ſhall be better when I have recovered myſelf——I was going to my Lady *Iſabella*'s chamber by his Highneſs's order—we do not want the circumſtances; interrupted *Manfred:* Since his Highneſs will have it ſo, proceed; but be brief. Lord! your Highneſs thwarts one ſo! replied *Bianca*——I fear my hair—I am ſure I never in my life—well! as I was telling your Greatneſs, I was going by his Highneſs's order to my Lady *Iſabella*'s chamber: She lies in the watchet-coloured chamber, on the right-hand, one pair

of

of ſtairs: So when I came to the great ſtairs—I was looking on his Highneſs's preſent here ——grant me patience! ſaid *Manfred*, will this wench never come to the point? what imports it to the Marquis, that I gave thee a bawble for thy faithful attendance on my daughter? we want to know what thou ſaweſt. I was going to tell your Highneſs, ſaid *Bianca*, if you would permit me.——So as I was rubbing the ring—I am ſure I had not gone up three ſteps, but I heard the rattling of armour; for all the world ſuch a clatter, as *Diego* ſays he heard when the Giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber —what does ſhe mean, my Lord! ſaid the Marquis; is your caſtle haunted by giants and goblins? Lord, what, has not your Greatneſs heard the ſtory of the Giant in the gallery-chamber? cried *Bianca*. I marvel his Highneſs has not told you——may hap you do not know there is a prophecy—This trifling is intolerable; interrupted *Manfred*. Let us diſmiſs this ſilly wench, my Lord? we have more important affairs

affairs to diſcuſs. By your favour, ſaid *Frederic*, theſe are no trifles: The enormous ſabre I was directed to in the wood, yon caſque, its fellow —are theſe viſions of this poor maiden's brain? ——ſo *Jaquez* thinks, may it pleaſe your Greatneſs: Said *Bianca*. He ſays this moon will not be out without our ſeeing ſome ſtrange revolution. For my part I ſhould not be ſurprized if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was ſaying, when I heard the clattering of armour, I was all in a cold ſweat—I looked up, and, if your Greatneſs will believe me, I ſaw upon the uppermoſt baniſter of the great ſtairs a hand in armour as big, as big—I thought I ſhould have ſwooned——I never ſtopped until I came hither ——would I were well out of this caſtle! My Lady *Matilda* told me but yeſter-morning that her Highneſs *Hippolita* knows ſomething—Thou art an inſolent! cried *Manfred*--Lord Marquis, it much miſgives me that this ſcene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domeſtics ſuborned to ſpread tales injurious to my honour? Purſue

your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was propoſed, by the intermarriage of our children: But truſt me, it ill becomes a Prince of your bearing to practice on mercenary wenches——I ſcorn your imputation; ſaid *Frederic:* until this hour I never ſet eyes on this damſel: I have given her no jewel!—my Lord, my Lord, your conſcience, your guilt accuſes you, and would throw the ſuſpicion on me—— but keep your daughter, and think no more of *Iſabella:* The judgments already fallen on your houſe forbid me matching into it.

Manfred alarmed at the reſolute tone in which *Frederic* delivered theſe words, endeavoured to pacify him. Diſmiſſing *Bianca*, he made ſuch ſubmiſſions to the Marquis, and threw in ſuch artful encomiums on *Matilda*, that *Frederic* was once more ſtaggered. However, as his paſſion was of ſo recent a date, it could not at once ſurmount the ſcruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from *Bianca*'s diſcourſe to perſuade him that heaven declared itſelf againſt

Manfred. The propoſed marriages too removed his claim to a diſtance; and the principality of *Otranto* was a ſtronger temptation, than the contingent reverſion of it with *Matilda.* Still he would not abſolutely recede from his engagements; but purpoſing to gain time, he demanded of *Manfred* if it was true in fact that *Hippolita* conſented to the divorce. The Prince, tranſported to find no other obſtacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, aſſured the Marquis it was ſo, and that he might ſatisfy himſelf of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus diſcourſing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. *Manfred* conducted *Frederic* to the great hall, where they were received by *Hippolita* and the young Princeſſes. *Manfred* placed the Marquis next to *Matilda,* and ſeated himſelf between his wife and *Iſabella. Hippolita* comported herſelf with an eaſy gravity; but the young Ladies were ſilent and melancholy. *Manfred,* who was determined to purſue his point with the Marquis in the

remainder of the evening, puſhed on the feaſt until it waxed late; affecting unreſtrained gaiety, and plying *Frederic* with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than *Manfred* wiſhed, declined his frequent challenges, on pretence of his late loſs of blood; while the Prince, to raiſe his own diſordered ſpirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himſelf in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his ſenſes.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. *Manfred* would have withdrawn with *Frederic*; but the latter pleading weakneſs and want of repoſe, retired to his chamber, galantly telling the Prince, that his daughter ſhould amuſe his Highneſs until himſelf could attend him. *Manfred* accepted the party, and to the no ſmall grief of *Iſabella* accompanied her to her apartment. *Matilda* waited on her mother to enjoy the freſhneſs of the evening on the ramparts of the caſtle.

Soon

Soon as the company were diſperſed their ſeveral ways, *Frederic*, quitting his chamber, enquired if *Hippolita* was alone, and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that at that hour ſhe generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The Marquis during the repaſt had beheld *Matilda* with increaſe of paſſion. He now wiſhed to find *Hippolita* in the diſpoſition her Lord had promiſed. The portents that had alarmed him, were forgotten in his deſires. Stealing ſoftly and unobſerved to the apartment of *Hippolita*, he entered it with a reſolution to encourage her acquieſcence to the divorce, having perceived that *Manfred* was reſolved to make the poſſeſſion of *Iſabella* an unalterable condition, before he would grant *Matilda* to his wiſhes.

The Marquis was not ſurprized at the ſilence that reigned in the Princeſs's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertized, in her oratory, he paſſed on. The door was a-

jar; the evening gloomy and overcaſt. Puſhing open the door gently, he ſaw a perſon kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it ſeemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whoſe back was towards him. The perſon ſeemed abſorbed in prayer. The Marquis was about to return, when the figure riſing, ſtood ſome moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The Marquis, expecting the holy perſon to come forth, and meaning to excuſe his uncivil interruption, ſaid, reverend Father, I ſought the Lady *Hippolita* —— *Hippolita!* replied a hollow voice? cameſt thou to this caſtle to ſeek *Hippolita?*— and then the figure, turning ſlowly round, diſcovered to *Frederic* the fleſhleſs jaws and empty ſockets of a ſkeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angels of grace, protect me! cried *Frederic* recoiling. Deſerve their protection! ſaid the Spectre. *Frederic* falling on his knees, adjured the Phantom to take pity on him. Doſt thou not remember me? ſaid the apparition. Remember

the

the wood of *Joppa*! Art thou that holy Hermit? cried *Frederic* trembling —— can I do ought for thy eternal peace? ——Waſt thou delivered from bondage, ſaid the ſpectre, to purſue carnal delights? Haſt thou forgotten the buried ſabre, and the beheſt of Heaven engraven on it?——I have not, I have not; ſaid *Frederic*——but ſay, bleſt ſpirit, what is thy errand to me? what remains to be done? To forget *Matilda!* ſaid the apparition — and vaniſhed.

Frederic's blood froze in his veins. For ſome minutes he remained motionleſs, Then falling proſtrate on his face before the altar, he beſought the interceſſion of every ſaint for pardon. A flood of tears ſucceeded to this tranſport; and the image of the beauteous *Matilda* ruſhing in ſpite of him on his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and paſſion. E'er he could recover from this agony of his ſpirits, the Princeſs *Hippolita* with a taper in her hand entered the oratory alone. Seeing a

man without motion on the floor, ſhe gave a ſhriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought *Frederic* to himſelf. Riſing ſuddenly, his face bedewed with tears, he would have ruſhed from her preſence; but *Hippolita* ſtopping him, conjured him in the moſt plaintive accents to explain the cauſe of his diſorder, and by what ſtrange chance ſhe had found him there in that poſture. Ah! virtuous Princeſs! ſaid the Marquis, penetrated with grief—and ſtopped. For the love of Heaven, my Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*, diſcloſe the cauſe of this tranſport! what mean theſe doleful ſounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has heaven ſtill in ſtore for the wretched *Hippolita?* —— yet ſilent!—by every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble Prince, continued ſhe falling at his feet, to diſcloſe the purport of what lies at thy heart—I ſee thou feeleſt for me; thou feeleſt the ſharp pangs that thou inflicteſt ——ſpeak for pity!—does ought thou knoweſt concern my child?—

I can-

I cannot ſpeak; cried *Frederic*, burſting from her—Oh! *Matilda!*

Quitting the Princeſs thus abruptly, he haſtened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accoſted by *Manfred*, who fluſhed by wine and love had come to ſeek him, and to propoſe to waſte ſome hours of the night in muſic and revelling. *Frederic*, offended at an invitation ſo diſſonant from the mood of his ſoul, puſhed him rudely aſide, and entering his chamber, flung the door intemperately againſt *Manfred*, and bolted it inwards. The haughty Prince, enraged at this unaccountable behaviour, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the moſt fatal exceſſes. As he croſſed the court, he was met by the domeſtic whom he had planted at the convent as a ſpy on *Jerome* and *Theodore*. This man, almoſt breathleſs with the haſte he had made, informed his Lord, that *Theodore* and ſome Lady from the caſtle were at that inſtant in private conference at the tomb of *Alfonſo* in St. *Nicholas*'s church. He had dogged

Theodore

Theodore thither, but the gloomineſs of the night, had prevented his diſcovering who the woman was.

Manfred, whoſe ſpirits were inflamed, and whom *Iſabella* had driven from her on his urging his paſſion with too little reſerve, did not doubt but the inquietude ſhe had expreſſed, had been occaſioned by her impatience to meet *Theodore*. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he haſtened ſecretly to the great church. Gliding ſoftly between the iſles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonſhine that ſhone faintly through the illuminated windows, he ſtole towards the tomb of *Alfonſo*, to which he was directed by indiſtinct whiſpers of the perſons he ſought. The firſt ſounds he could diſtinguiſh were——Does it alas! depend on me? *Manfred* will never permit our union——No, this ſhall prevent it! cried the tyrant, drawing his dagger, and plunging it over her ſhoulder into the boſom of the perſon that ſpoke——ah! me, I am ſlain!

cried

cried *Matilda* ſinking; good heaven, receive my ſoul! Savage, inhuman monſter! what haſt thou done! cried *Theodore*, ruſhing on him, and wrenching his dagger from him——Stop, ſtop thy impious hand! cried *Matilda*; it is my father! *Manfred* waking as from a trance, beat his breaſt, twiſted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from *Theodore* to diſpatch himſelf. *Theodore* ſcarce leſs diſtracted, and only maſtering the tranſports of his grief to aſſiſt *Matilda*, had now by his cries drawn ſome of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavoured in concert with the afflicted *Theodore* to ſtop the blood of the dying Princeſs, the reſt prevented *Manfred* from laying violent hands on himſelf.

Matilda reſigning herſelf patiently to her fate, acknowledged with looks of grateful love the zeal of *Theodore*. Yet oft as her faintneſs would permit her ſpeech its way, ſhe begged the aſſiſtants to comfort her father. *Jerome* by this time had learnt the fatal news, and reached the church.

church. His looks ſeemed to reproach *Theodore*: but turning to *Manfred*, he ſaid, now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of *Alfonſo* cried to heaven for vengeance; and heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by aſſaſſination, that thou mighteſt ſhed thy own blood at the foot of that Prince's ſepulchre! — Cruel man! cried *Matilda*, to aggravate the woes of a parent! may heaven bleſs my father, and forgive him as I do! My Lord, my gracious Sire, doſt thou forgive thy child? Indeed I came not hither to meet *Theodore!* I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother ſent me to intercede for thee, for her——deareſt father, bleſs your child, and ſay you forgive her—forgive thee! murderous monſter! cried *Manfred*—can aſſaſſins forgive? I took thee for *Iſabella*; but heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child!——oh! *Matilda*—I cannot utter it—canſt thou forgive the blindneſs of my rage! I can, I do! and may heaven confirm it! ſaid *Matilda* —— but while

while I have life to aſk it—Oh! my mother! what will ſhe feel!—will you comfort her, my Lord! will you not put her away? indeed ſhe loves you—oh! I am faint! bear me to the caſtle—can I live to have her cloſe my eyes?

Theodore and the monks beſought her earneſtly to ſuffer herſelf to be borne into the convent; but her inſtances were ſo preſſing to be carried to the caſtle, that placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as ſhe requeſted. *Theodore* ſupporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of deſpairing love, ſtill endeavoured to inſpire her with hopes of life. *Jerome* on the other ſide comforted her with diſcourſes of heaven, and holding a crucifix before her, which ſhe bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her paſſage to immortality. *Manfred* plunged in the deepeſt affliction, followed the litter in deſpair.

E'er they reached the caſtle, *Hippolita*, informed of the dreadful cataſtrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child: but when ſhe ſaw the

the afflicted proceſſion, the mightineſs of her grief deprived her of her ſenſes, and ſhe fell lifeleſs to the earth in a ſwoon. *Iſabella* and *Frederic*, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almoſt equal ſorrow. *Matilda* alone ſeemed inſenſible to her own ſituation: every thought was loſt in tenderneſs for her mother. Ordering the litter to ſtop, as ſoon as *Hippolita* was brought to herſelf, ſhe aſked for her father. He approached, unable to ſpeak. *Matilda* ſeizing his hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then claſped them to her heart. *Manfred* could not ſupport this act of pathetic piety. He daſhed himſelf on the ground, and curſed the day he was born. *Iſabella*, apprehenſive that theſe ſtruggles of paſſion were more than *Matilda* could ſupport, took upon herſelf to order *Manfred* to be borne to his apartment, while ſhe cauſed *Matilda* to be conveyed to the neareſt chamber. *Hippolita*, ſcarce more alive than her daughter, was regardleſs of every thing but her: but when the tender *Iſabella*'s care would have

likewiſe

likewiſe removed her, while the ſurgeons examined *Matilda*'s wound, ſhe cried, remove me! never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her. *Matilda* raiſed her eyes at her mother's voice, but cloſed them again without ſpeaking. Her ſinking pulſe and the damp coldneſs of her hand ſoon diſpelled all hopes of recovery. *Theodore* followed the ſurgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal ſentence with a tranſport equal to frenzy—Since ſhe cannot live mine, cried he, at leaſt ſhe ſhall be mine in death!—Father! *Jerome!* will you not join our hands? cried he to the Friar, who with the Marquis had accompanied the ſurgeons. What means thy diſtracted raſhneſs? ſaid *Jerome*; is this an hour for marriage! It is, it is, cried *Theodore*, alas! there is no other! Young man, thou art too unadviſed: ſaid *Frederic:* Doſt thou think we are to liſten to thy fond tranſports in this hour of fate? what pretenſions haſt thou to the Princeſs? Thoſe of a Prince; ſaid *Theodore*; of the ſovereign of *Otranto.*

This

This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am. Thou raveſt: ſaid the Marquis: there is no Prince of *Otranto* but myſelf, now *Manfred* by murder, by ſacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretenſions. My Lord, ſaid *Jerome*, aſſuming an air of command, he tells you true. It was not my purpoſe the ſecret ſhould have been divulged ſo ſoon; but fate preſſes onward to its work. What his hot-headed paſſion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, Prince, that when *Alfonſo* ſet ſail for the Holy Land—— is this a ſeaſon for explanations? cried *Theodore*. Father, come and unite me to the Princeſs; ſhe ſhall be mine—in every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life! my adored *Matilda!* continued *Theodore*, ruſhing back into the inner chamber, will you not be mine? will you not bleſs your——*Iſabella* made ſigns to him to be ſilent, apprehending the Princeſs was near her end. What is ſhe dead? cried *Theodore*; is it poſſible? The violence of his exclamations brought *Matilda* to herſelf. Lifting up her eyes, ſhe

ſhe looked round for her mother——Life of my ſoul! I am here: cried *Hippolita*; think not I will quit thee! Oh! you are too good; ſaid *Matilda*—but weep not for me, my mother! I am going where ſorrow never dwells——*Iſabella*, thou haſt loved me; wot thou not ſupply my fondneſs to this dear, dear woman?——indeed I am faint! Oh! my child! my child! ſaid *Hippolita* in a flood of tears, can I not withhold thee a moment!—It will not be; ſaid *Matilda*—commend me to heaven—where is my father? forgive him, deareſt mother——forgive him my death; it was an error—Oh! I had forgotten—deareſt mother, I vowed never to ſee *Theodore* more—perhaps that has drawn down this calamity——but it was not intentional——can you pardon me?——Oh! wound not my agonizing ſoul! ſaid *Hippolita*; thou never couldſt offend me—alas! ſhe faints! help! help!—I would ſay ſomething more, ſaid *Matilda* ſtruggling, but it wonnot be——*Iſabella*——*Theodore*——for my ſake—Oh!—ſhe expired. *Iſabella* and her wo-

men tore *Hippolita* from the corſe; but *Theodore* threatened deſtruction to all who attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thouſand kiſſes on her clay-cold hands, and uttered every expreſſion that deſpairing love could dictate.

Iſabella, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted *Hippolita* to her apartment; but, in the middle of the court, they were met by *Manfred*, who, diſtracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing to the chamber where ſhe lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances of this unhappy company the event he dreaded. What! is ſhe dead! cried he in wild confuſion——a clap of thunder at that inſtant ſhook the caſtle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. *Frederic* and *Jerome* thought the laſt day was at hand. The latter, forcing *Theodore* along with them, ruſhed into the court. The moment *Theodore* appeared, the walls of the caſtle behind *Manfred* were

thrown

thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of *Alfonſo*, dilated to an immenſe magnitude, appeared in the center of the ruins. Behold in *Theodore* the true heir of *Alfonſo!* ſaid the viſion: And having pronounced thoſe words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it aſcended ſolemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting aſunder, the form of St. *Nicholas* was ſeen, and receiving *Alfonſo*'s ſhade, they were ſoon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell proſtrate on their faces, acknowledging the divine will. The firſt that broke ſilence was *Hippolita*. My Lord, ſaid ſhe to the deſponding *Manfred*, behold the vanity of human greatneſs! *Conrad* is gone! *Matilda* is no more! in *Theodore* we view the true Prince of *Otranto*. By what miracle he is ſo, I know not—ſuffice it to us, our doom is pronounced! ſhall we not, can we but dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of heaven? heaven ejects us ——whither can we fly, but to yon holy cells

that yet offer us a retreat?——Thou guiltleſs but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes! replied *Manfred*, my heart at laſt is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh! could—but it cannot be—ye are loſt in wonder——let me at laſt do juſtice on myſelf! To heap ſhame on my own head is all the ſatisfaction I have left to offer to offended heaven. My ſtory has drawn down theſe judgments: Let my confeſſion atone ——but ah! what can atone for uſurpation and a murdered child! a child murdered in a conſecrated place!——Liſt, Sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!

Alfonſo, ye all know, died in the holy land ——ye would interrupt me; ye would ſay he came not fairly to his end—it is moſt true—— why elſe this bitter cup which *Manfred* muſt drink to the dregs? *Ricardo*, my grandfather, was his chamberlain—I would draw a veil over my anceſtor's crimes—but it is in vain! *Alfonſo* died by poiſon. A fictitious will declared *Ricardo* his heir. His crimes purſued him—yet he

loſt

loſt no *Conrad*, no *Matilda!* I pay the price of uſurpation for all! A ſtorm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt, he vowed to St. *Nicholas* to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach *Otranto*. The ſacrifice was accepted: the ſaint appeared to him in a dream, and promiſed that *Ricardo*'s poſterity ſhould reign in *Otranto*, until the rightful owner ſhould be grown too large to inhabit the caſtle, and as long as iſſue-male from *Ricardo*'s loins ſhould remain to enjoy it——Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myſelf, remains of all his wretched race!——I have done—the woes of theſe three days ſpeak the reſt. How this young man can be *Alfonſo*'s heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are theſe dominions; I reſign them——yet I knew not *Alfonſo* had an heir——I queſtion not the will of heaven—poverty and prayer muſt fill up the woeful ſpace, until *Manfred* ſhall be ſummoned to *Ricardo*.

What remains, is my part to declare, ſaid *Jerome*. When *Alfonſo* ſet ſail for the holy land,

he

he was driven by a ſtorm to the coaſt of *Sicily*. The other veſſel, which bore *Ricardo* and his train, as your *Lordſhip* muſt have heard, was ſeparated from him. It is moſt true, ſaid *Manfred*; and the title you give me is more than an outcaſt can claim—well! be it ſo—proceed. *Jerome* bluſhed, and continued. For three months Lord *Alfonſo* was wind-bound in *Sicily*. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin named *Victoria*. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleaſures. They were married. Yet deeming this amour incongruous with the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he determined to conceal their nuptials, until his return from the Cruſado, when he purpoſed to ſeek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his abſence ſhe was delivered of a daughter: But ſcarce had ſhe felt a mother's pangs, ere ſhe heard the fatal rumour of her Lord's death, and the ſucceſſion of *Ricardo*. What could a friendleſs, helpleſs woman do? would her teſtimony avail?—yet,

my

my Lord, I have an authentic writing——it needs not; ſaid *Manfred*; the horrors of theſe days, the viſion we have but now ſeen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thouſand parchments. *Matilda*'s death and my expulſion—— Be compoſed, my Lord, ſaid *Hippolita*; this holy man did not mean to recal your griefs. *Jerome* proceeded.

I ſhall not dwell on what is needleſs. The daughter of which *Victoria* was delivered, was at her maturity beſtowed in marriage on me. *Victoria* died; and the ſecret remained locked in my breaſt. *Theodore*'s narrative has told the reſt.

The Friar ceaſed. The diſconſolate company retired to the remaining part of the caſtle. In the morning *Manfred* ſigned his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of *Hippolita*, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighbouring convents. *Frederic* offered his daughter to the new Prince, which *Hippolita*'s tenderneſs for *Iſabella* concurred to promote:

promote: But *Theodore*'s grief was too freſh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent diſcourſes with *Iſabella* of his dear *Matilda*, that he was perſuaded he could know no happineſs but in the ſociety of one with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken poſſeſſion of his ſoul.

F I N I S.